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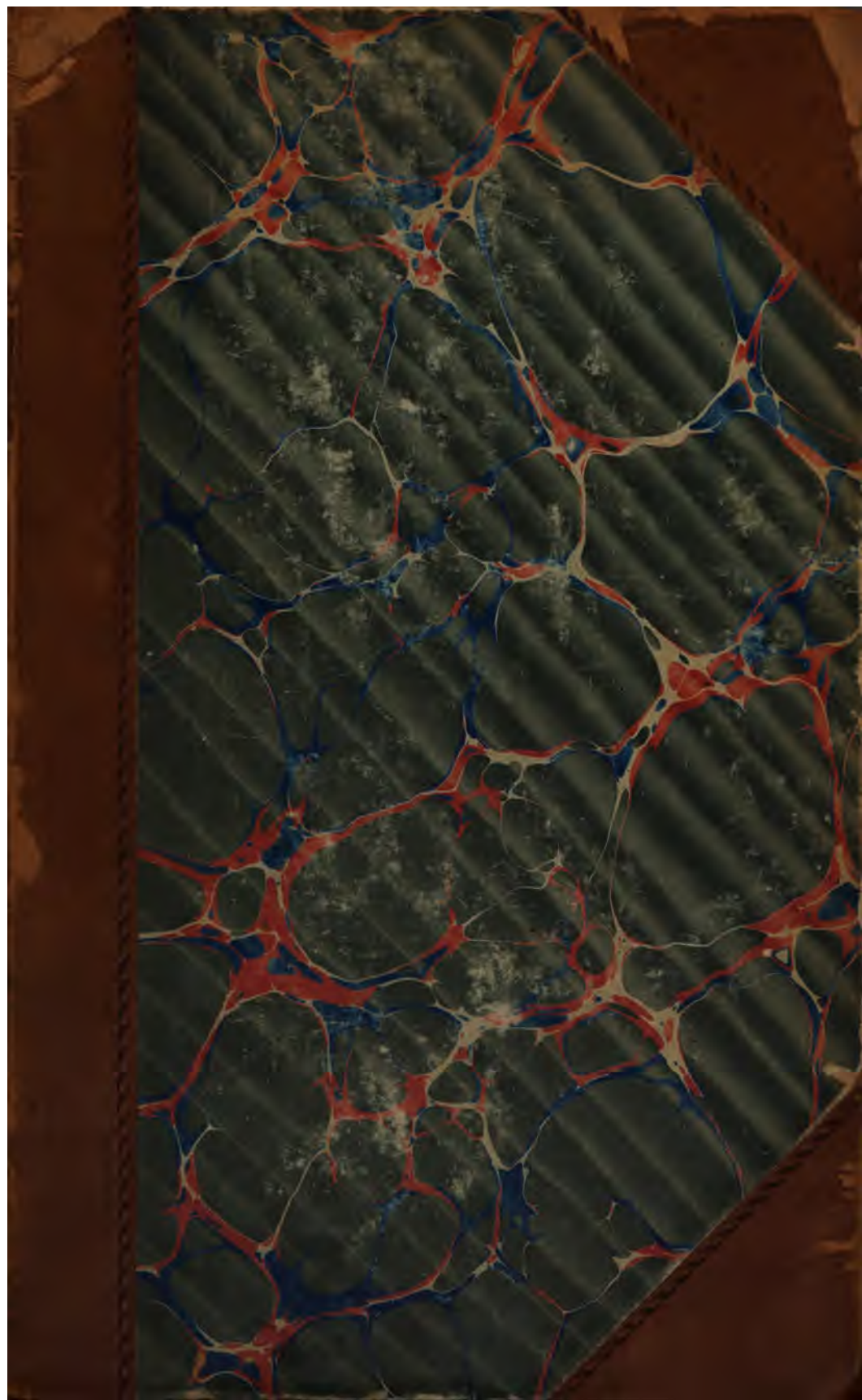
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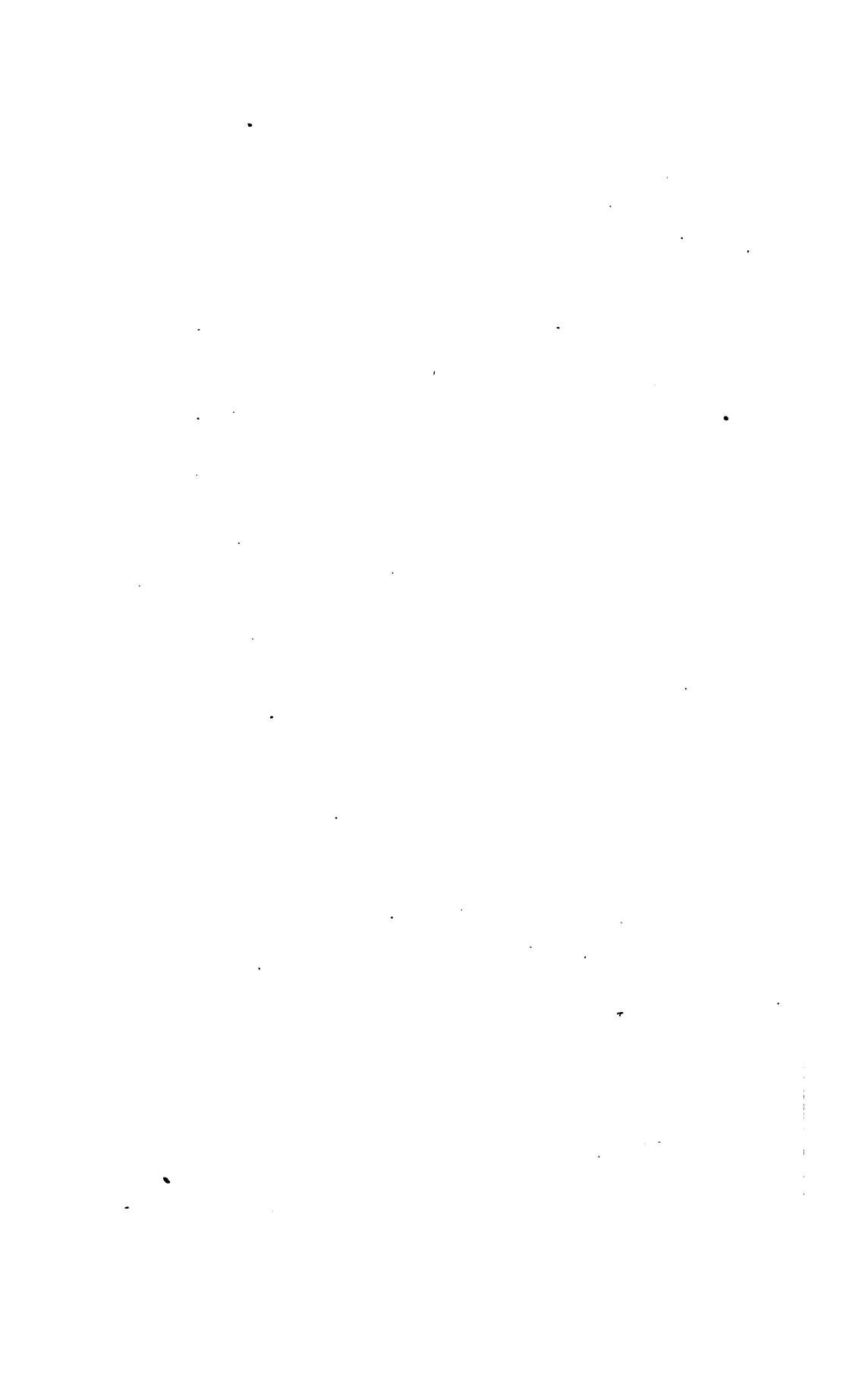


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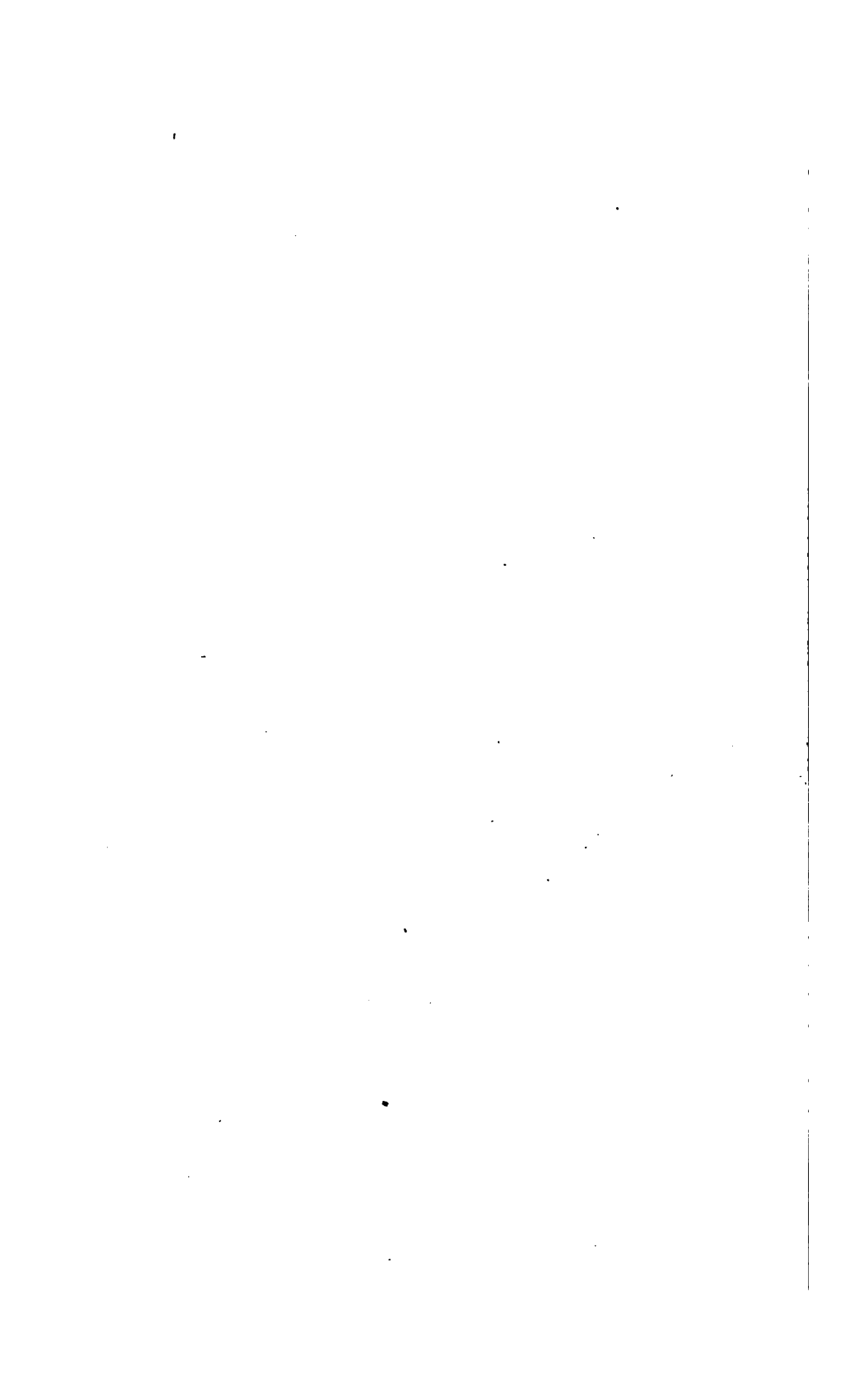












HISTORY  
OF THE  
INSURRECTION,

IN THE  
FOUR WESTERN COUNTIES  
OF  
PENNSYLVANIA:

IN THE YEAR M.DCC.XCIV.

WITH A RECORD OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES SPECIALLY CONNECTED THEREWITH:

AND AN

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY,

---

BY WILLIAM FINDLEY,  
MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.

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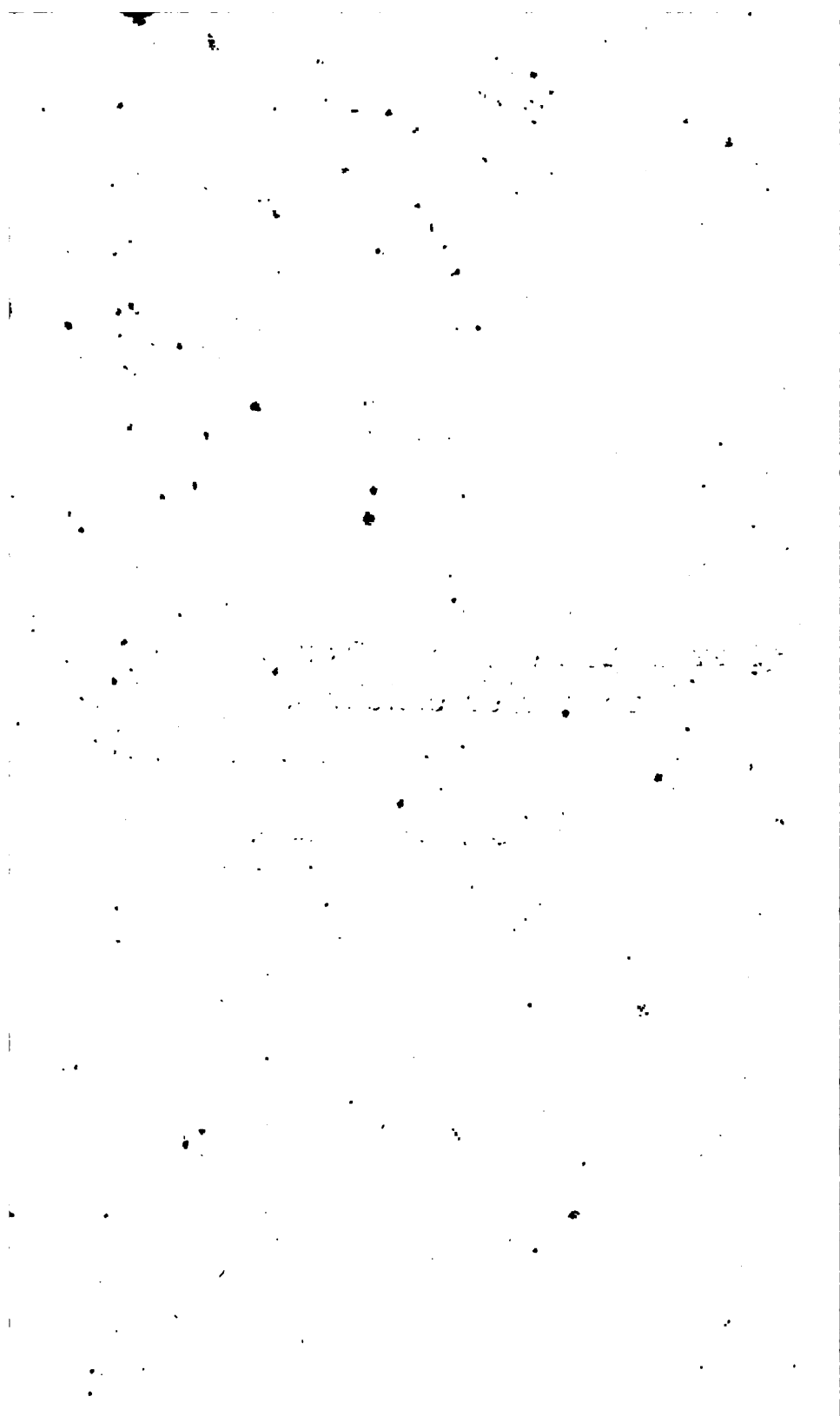
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## P R E F A C E.

PERHAPS there is no nation on the earth, that has in so short a period experienced such various and interesting scenes as the people of the United States. Composed as they are of individual adventurers from different nations, or the descendants of such, and bringing with them the various habits and languages of the nations to which they had respectively belonged, braving the horrors of the wilderness, and combating unaided with savage tribes, they associated together in small dependent republics, and always admitted the emigrants from other nations to a participation of their privileges, and emigrants of different nations and languages attached themselves to the society and soil, and soon learned to embrace the country as if it had been their native land. The colonies adapted their laws to their own situation and circumstances, and all of them preserved a love of liberty and equality in their social order. Though the seeds of jealousy were artfully sown among them by the power on whom they were dependent, yet watchful against those insidious arts, they united to vindicate their rights against the aggressions of that very power, whose authority they were accustomed to acknowledge, and by their exertions finally triumphed over it, till they assumed a rank and station among the independent nations of the earth. They not only formed constitutions and laws, for the internal police of their

respective states, but for the government of the whole, in a national capacity, and changed and revised not only their laws, but the forms and powers of their government, without an appeal to arms, and without the effects of those changes operating any sensible alteration in the circumstances of the people, and thus exhibited a spectacle, new and interesting in the history of human events.

The citizens, being thus collected from various nations, or from such different parts of the same nation as had little correspondence with each other, and their character being influenced by a continual succession of emigrants, they seem to have formed a character peculiar to themselves, and in some respects distinct from that of other nations. Indeed though they emigrated from different nations, they were generally of the same rank in society. None of the privileged orders of Europe visited the colonies, except as governors of provinces, when the government of a province became, by the industry of the planters, an object sufficient for the support of a lord, whose ancestors had dissipated the family estate, or who enjoyed a noble title without a patrimony. Privileged orders never made a part of the mass in the colonial settlements, and the settlers derive their dignity and importance, through the natural and honourable channels of prudence and industry.

Perhaps no part of the American character is more prominent than that of mildness of temper; even their mobs and riots are accompanied with less ferocity, and marked with fewer instances of bloodshed, than those of any other nation. Even during that period at the commencement of the revolution, when the regular governments gave way to what in the language of law was called a government of mobs, or committees acting according to discretion, and under peculiar circumstances of irritation, occasioned by the opposition of the adherents to the old government, yet the public peace was preserved and property secured, and the severities towards the opposers of the revolution were more mild than has been exhibited by any other nation in similar circumstances.

During a tedious war, in which the citizens generally were at one time or other personally engaged, there was an unavoidable relaxation of morals, and of the execution of the laws, yet notwithstanding this circumstance, the weakness of the general government, and the pressure of an accumulating debt, which necessarily occasioned oppressive taxes on the people, and discontent among the creditors, I say these imperious circumstances were so well borne during the continuance of the confederation, that there was no symptom of an insurrection, except in one instance in the state of Massachusetts. Though this insurrection is acknowledged to have been excited by very oppressive taxes, and to have been long premeditated and well digested, and occasioned considerable alarm for some time, yet it was finally settled almost without bloodshed, or occasioning any lasting confusion. That under so great a change as was made by the revision of the federal government, and the new extension of its fiscal powers to internal objects of taxation, and the operation of these powers on subjects, and in modes, against which the people in most of the states had the strongest prepossessions, it being only known to them by the odium of its name, and that odium having been strongly sanctioned by the first Congress, and the law, from not having provided for extending the judicial authority of the federal government, being ill calculated for the convenient protection of the fiscal officers, or citizens aggrieved by their means, I say that, under such circumstances, violent opposition should have been given but in one distant survey, affords a further proof of the mildness of the American character, and of a prevailing love of order and respect for the authority of the laws; and if even this instance was unpremeditated and desultory, and might have been easily prevented by a proper and seasonable application of the means provided by law, and if when all the circumstances are taken into view, and proper allowances made for the indiscretions of those who took a temporary lead in the excesses, and for the usual appearances of human nature in a

state of extreme agitation ; I say, when all these circumstances are considered maturely, and proper allowances made, I apprehend the insurrection in the western counties of Pennsylvania will not form a very strong exception to the mildness of the American character.

Having been an early actor in, and an attentive observer of, the American revolution and its consequences, and having been under early apprehensions, that the introduction of the excise system without competent arrangements for the prompt execution of it would put the American character to a new test, and these apprehensions being excited by the deep rooted prejudices which I knew to have always existed against it in the western country, where providence had ordered my lot, I was anxious to procure a repeal of the law, or, that not appearing to be then attainable, to have it so modified as to give the least possible cause of irritation. I was attentive, as far as I had an opportunity to impress the people with whom I corresponded, with a sense of the danger of riots, and to advise those intrusted with the execution of the laws to pursue such measures as might seasonably discourage a disposition to violent opposition; but my advice to this purpose not being taken, I sat down in solemn silence, to wait the event. And unfortunately, that event happened which my fears had in some measure anticipated, and which I had for some time suspected was desired by some, who appear to have been much better acquainted, than I was, with the disposition that led to the insurrection, and were possessed of the means of preventing it. I was more fortunate, however, in my private correspondents; for, with one lonely exception, they were all uniformly friends of order.

Such an extraordinary event happening so near to the place of my residence, and among a people who then formed a part of my immediate constituents, and suddenly spreading its influence over a considerable extent of country, and involving not only the actors, but those who endeavoured to quench the spreading flame, and even such as studied to act the part of

neutral observers, in anxiety and dread, and determining those who administered the government to have recourse to the physical power of the nation, seemed to me a proper subject for historical investigation.

I conceived, that a record of the insurrection, and of the circumstances which led to it, and the events connected with it, might be of use, to teach the citizens in other places, and perhaps in future times, the danger of small beginnings in making opposition to established laws, and of connecting their respect to the government, with the prejudices they may entertain against persons in office, or even with their prepossessions against particular laws. It may also teach the lovers of order, the impropriety of affecting a neutrality of conduct, in the time of civil convulsion. They will discover, that if a spirit of disorder is permitted to prevail, no character or interest in society will be secured from its effects. And that if government is reduced to the necessity of extraordinary efforts; even the innocent may not always be secure from hardships in the result.

A knowledge of these events may be of use even to those who are intrusted with the administration of the government, if such a crisis should ever again happen, or rather for the salutary purpose of guarding against such emergencies.

If a record of cases in the practice of medicine is of use for the prevention or cure of diseases in the animal system, certainly a knowledge of the diseases which sometimes shake the political frame may be of future advantage, for preventing or correcting such events. This is the more necessary in such a government as ours, the stability and prosperity of which depend so much on the confidence of the citizens at large.

I had many reasons for wishing this work to have been performed by some other hand. To write impartially of transactions, wherein so many living characters are concerned, is not a very desirable work, and can scarcely fail of being censured by some. However, being conscious that I am not in-

fluenced by hopes or fears, and being at a time, and in a situation of life, that leaves me little to dread or hope, from the frowns or favours of party, or of men in power, I have studied impartiality in the characters I have delineated, and the facts which I have stated; and I have sought after truth with the utmost solicitude. Indeed, I have declined introducing such persons by name, especially, where there was any thing disagreeable attached to their character, as were not already rendered very prominent in these transactions.

A history of the western insurrection is also necessary, to correct wrong information that is gone abroad concerning it. Indeed, the citizens of the United States, having no authentic channels, through which to derive information concerning it, can form their opinion only from desultory and unconnected reports, and if there are any, who through prejudice or any other motive, have studiously misrepresented some material circumstances respecting it, or injured the characters of any of the agents engaged one way or other in it, the necessity that there should be some responsible standard for correcting such mistakes, whether they are wilful or inadvertent, is the greater.

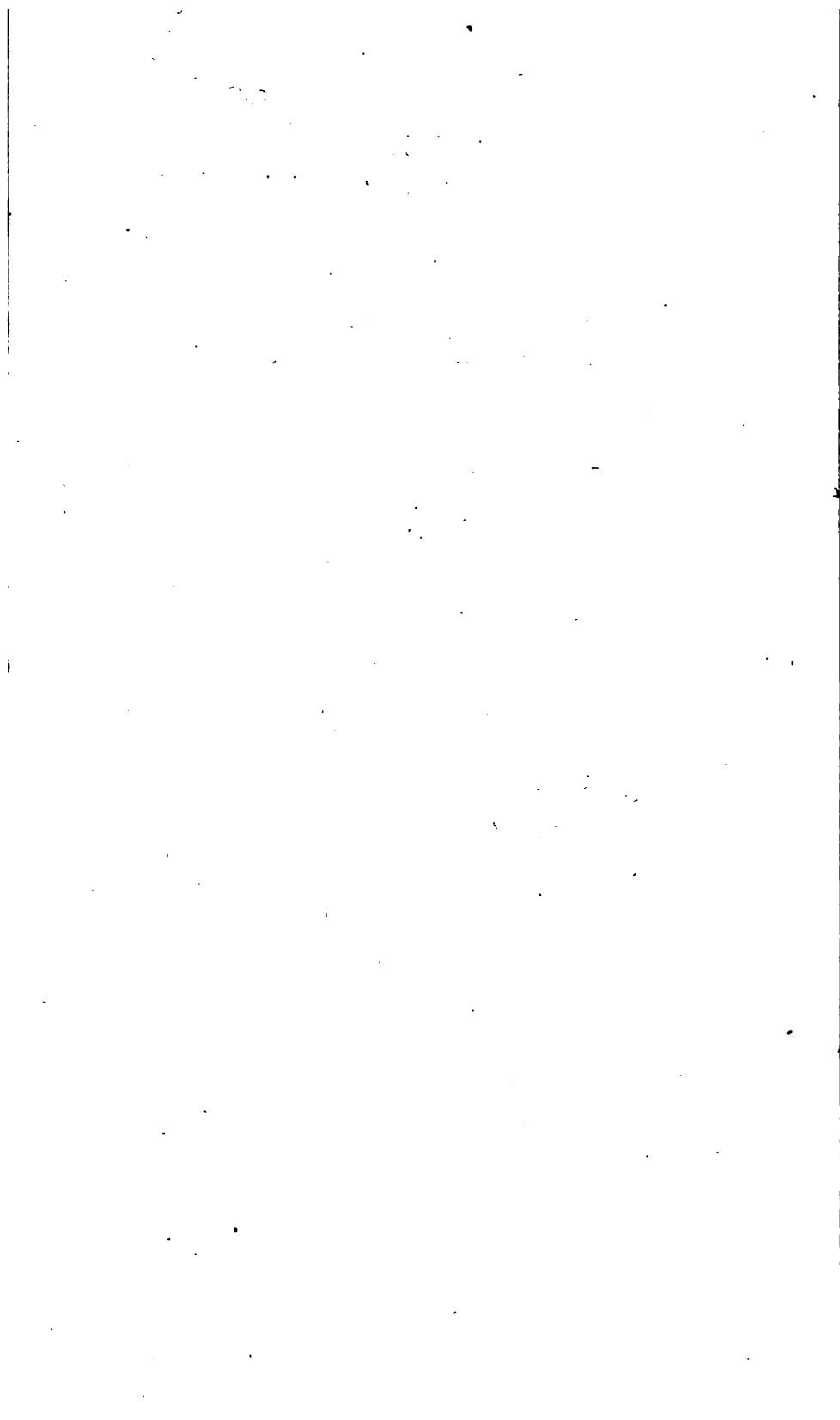
I was soon convinced of the necessity of such a work, and early turned my attention towards making preparations for it, but delayed the execution in hopes, that some other person would undertake it; but finding that no person engaged in it, on a plan sufficiently extensive, I resumed the task, but suppressed a number of incidents, which, though they were interesting in themselves, were not essential to the understanding of the general subject, the retaining of which would have swelled the work too much. Many more of these than I intended to insert are to be found related in a very entertaining manner, in a work written by Mr. Brackenridge, which being, however, chiefly confined to what fell under his own observation, is not sufficiently extensive in its plan to supersede the necessity of this work. In some few instances, the facts are differently

stated. In several instances, I have myself had occasion to correct the information on which I first depended.

No part of these transactions have been more misrepresented, than the conferences of the commissioners from the second Parkison ferry meeting, with the President of the United States, at Carlisle, and this seems to have been done with a criminal design. Aware, that some misrepresentations might be made (though not of the extent to which they have been carried), Mr. Redick and myself were attentive in keeping the discourses in memory, and had frequently, both separately, and together, repeated the substance of them, but particularly, those delivered at the meeting convened at Parkison's ferry to receive the report of our mission. I wrote out the substance of the discourses delivered in the various conferences with the President, and sent them to Mr. Redick for his correction, before I inserted them in this work. Though the President expressed himself more largely than is here inserted, yet we only studied to preserve the scope and as nearly in his own language as we could.

However necessary it was for my own vindication, to introduce my own name and character so much in the latter part of this work, I would not have troubled the reader with it, if my conduct, and the conduct of some of my friends, had not been evidently misrepresented, with a view to cast an odium on Republican principles,





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## C O N T E N T S.

- CHAP. I. *The first settlement of the country—Competition of the claims of Virginia and Pennsylvania, occasions difficulty, but is settled without violence, Page* 17
- CHAP. II. *Operation of the excise law of the state,* 26
- CHAP. III. *Federal excise, opposition to its execution, by meetings, resolves, &c.* 37
- CHAP. IV. *A digression on the right of holding political meetings, and of petitioning—The Mingo creek association.* 47
- CHAP. V. *Riots committed, previous to the insurrection,* 58
- CHAP. VI. *The protection afforded to officers and complying citizens by the head of the revenue department, was calculated rather to excite than to suppress opposition,* 68
- CHAP. VII. *Some peculiar causes of resentment against the inspector,* 77
- CHAP. VIII. *Commencement of the insurrection—Mingo creek meeting—The mail robbed—Rendezvous ordered—Characters of those who issued the order delineated—Description of the rendezvous at Braddock's field—Riots against the collector Wells and Webster,* 84
- CHAP. IX. *First Parkison's ferry meeting—Arrival of the commissioners—Meeting of conferees at Pittsburgh,* 110
- CHAP. X. *Meeting at Redstone Old Fort. Special circumstances which prevented its success,* 121

CHAP. XI. *Second conference with the commissioners at Pittsburgh—Terms of amnesty—The people sign them—Objections to signing them—Some riots—Second meeting at Parkison's ferry—Commissioners sent to the President with more explicit assurances,* Page 129

CHAP. XII. *Inflammatory temper of the army at Carlisle—Two men killed—The President's influence in correcting that temper,* 140

CHAP. XIII. *Observations on the structure of the army—An enquiry whether a militia or mercenary army is safest to be employed in supporting the civil magistrate—Extraneous causes of inflammation in the army,* 153

CHAP. XIV. *Interviews of the commissioners sent by the Parkison ferry meeting, with the President of the United States at Carlisle,* 169

CHAP. XV. *Last meeting at Parkison ferry—Commissioners sent from it, wait on the secretary of the treasury and the commander in chief, with unequivocal assurances taken at the musters and resolved by the meeting—The commander in chief's answer.* 190

CHAP. XVI. *Proceedings of the judiciary—conduct of different corps in executing judicial process—Of general White—The number, character and fate of the prisoners,* 200

CHAP. XVII. *Peculiar circumstances in which the judiciary was placed,* 216

CHAP. XVIII. *Influence and authority exercised by the secretary of the treasury—The cases of major Powers, and sheriff Hamilton,* 223

CHAP. XIX. *The secretary holds an inquisition in order to criminate Messrs. Smilie, Gallatin, and myself. He and general White assert falsehoods respecting my character,* 238

CHAP. XX. <i>A narrative of my own conduct respecting the federal government ; the excise law and the insurrection,</i>	Page 256
CHAP. XXI. <i>Animadversions on the secretary's report to the President,</i>	291
CHAP. XXII. <i>An inquiry, whether the insurrection was the result of a preconcerted plan, and whether the expedition was necessary to restore order in the western counties, or to accomplish other objects ; together with extracts from the correspondence between the governor of Pennsylvania and the secretary of state on the subject of the insurrection,</i>	303
<i>Appendix,</i>	315



# H I S T O R Y

## OF THE

# INSURRECTION, &c.

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### C H A P. I.

**I**F the numerous difficulties encountered and hardships sustained, by the people inhabiting the western counties of Pennsylvania, were to be minutely related, and their behaviour under them fairly stated, their conduct generally would be entitled to a much greater proportion of approbation than blame, and their sufferings would have a powerful claim on the sympathy of their fellow citizens. But it is not my intention to give a history of the peculiar circumstances, with which the first settlement and progress of that country was accompanied. A very superficial

sketch of it, however, will be necessary to the right understanding of the circumstances which influenced those disorders, which in the year 1794 rose to such a height as to be denominated an Insurrection.

As soon as General Boquet had established peace with the Indians north-west of the Ohio, in the year 1766, a number of people commenced a settlement on the lands adjacent to Redstone creek, which empties into the Monongahela river, about forty miles above its junction with the Allegany at Pittsburgh.

The boundary line not being then run between Pennsylvania and Virginia, and the land not having been purchased from the Indians, no legal title could be obtained for land, but it was well known that both provinces had always admitted the right of pre-emption to those who had settled and improved on the land, previous to warrants having issued for it to any other persons.

The proprietary of Pennsylvania having, in the year 1768, purchased the country from the Indians as far west as the Allegany and Ohio rivers, opened an office for the sale of those lands on the 3d of April 1769. When the office was opened he made proclamation, and instructed his surveyors to respect the lands of actual settlers who had improved to the value of five pounds, and not to survey them on warrants (or locations) of a date posterior to the settlements, except to those by whom the settlements were made.

Favoured by this indulgence, which however was usual in both provinces, few of those who lived adjacent to the Monongahela, and had already occupied the lands, applied to the office for locations or



warrants. They were not certain to which province the soil belonged, and probably had a secret wish that it should belong to Virginia; because in that case it would cost them but about one fourteenth part of the price for which land was sold in Pennsylvania, and men easily believe according to their wishes.

In or about the year 1774, governor Lord Dunmore opened several offices for the sale of land within the bounds of what are now called the four western counties of Pennsylvania. The warrants were granted on paying two shillings and six-pence fees: The purchase money was trifling, being only ten shillings per hundred acres, and even that was not demanded. This was an effectual inducement to apply to Dunmore's agents in preference to the Pennsylvania land-office; the land being the property of the king was at the disposal of the governor, who also procured a court of Virginia to be extended to the Ohio, and in a short time two county courts were held south of the Monongahela, and one north of it at Redstone old fort, all of them within the territory since ascertained to belong to Pennsylvania. Lord Dunmore also commenced an unprovoked war against the Indians then at peace, and led out an expedition against their towns, in defence of which a severe battle was fought at the mouth of the great Kenhawa; in which, though the Indians were defeated, the white people lost a number of men.

From the first settlement of this territory the inhabitants had suffered by occasional predatory excursions of the Indians, but there had been no general war with them. It was well understood that the design of

the British governor was to embroil the colonies with each other, and to produce a general Indian war, in order to turn their attention from the rapid progress of British encroachments, or weaken their confidence in each other, and oblige them to exhaust their strength in an Indian war. Though he failed in the first, he was too successful in the last; for his wanton attack on the Indians laid the foundation for that savage enmity which they displayed in their ceaseless depredations committed on the western frontiers during the whole course of the revolutionary war, and which probably is not yet extinguished.

The governor of Pennsylvania having opened the land-office in April 1769, several thousands of locations were applied for on the first day. The greatest number of these was taken for land laying north of the Monongahela, in what yet continues to be Westmoreland county, to the greater part of which the claim of Virginia was never supposed to extend, and great numbers made actual settlements in that country without any office rights. This settlement was very rapidly extended under Pennsylvania, as far north as Crooked creek, above forty miles north of the Monongahela, and the first settlers were generally a more sober, orderly people, than commonly happens in the first settlement of new countries. A great proportion of them were farmer's sons, or farmers themselves, with rising families, who emigrated from the old counties, and who were generally acquainted with each other.

The legislature erected all the country west of the Laurel-hill into a county by the name of Westmore-

land, but did not fix a permanent seat of justice, on account of the unsettled state of the country. The courts were provisionally held at Hanna's-town, about three miles north of Greensburgh, the present county town. This county was erected some years previous to the extension of the Virginia courts into that country.

After the Virginia courts were erected a strange state of society was produced, in that part of Westmoreland county which now forms the counties of Washington and Fayette, and that part of Allegany which lies south of the Monongahela. Justices of the peace, who were then judges of the court in both states, held commissions under, and executed the laws of, their respective states, in such a manner as that magistrates, militia officers, &c. exercised their authority over the people in the same settlement, according as they made their election of submitting to the one or the other. Many submitted alternately to the one or the other, as it comported with their interest or their caprice, and it is reasonable to believe that by many neither was well submitted to. This relaxed state of society encouraged a greater number of ungovernable people to settle among them than otherwise would have done.

When the boundary line was amicably settled towards the end of the British war, a number of those who had imbibed the greatest prejudice against the laws of Pennsylvania, together with those who were offended at the high price, which those who had always adhered to Pennsylvania were obliged to pay for their land, projected a plan for erecting a new state.

By the terms of settling the boundary every person was to hold his land on the terms under which he had first settled. The new state scheme being made treasonable by a law of Pennsylvania, was no further attempted, but many of those who had strong prejudices against the government of Pennsylvania, sold their plantations, and gave place to others.

During the whole time of the war with Britain, and for some time after it ceased, the country was cruelly wasted by perpetual savage depredations. The frontier was equally exposed on all sides, round the whole extent of the country, except perhaps a few miles on the east, near Youghiogany river. The whole of what is now Westmoreland and Allegany counties, except a very few townships, was either actually laid waste, or the inhabitants obliged to shelter themselves in forts. The then county town of Westmoreland was attacked in the time of court, and though the records were preserved, yet the town, with most of the property it contained, was burnt; a number were also killed and taken prisoners. The Indians were so numerous as to afford just ground to apprehend that they would destroy the other stations, where people were collected, and a detached party did kill several at the next station; however the firing, which was continued in platoons against the fort all that day, was so loud as to be heard distinctly at eight or nine miles distance. This, with the alarm given by those who escaped from the court, put the people in the interior part of the country on their guard. At this time it was usual with the Indians to attack those settlements in great force, accompanied by the militia of Canada.

But though the northern frontier of this country was thus perpetually harrassed, those in the more southwardly settlements were by no means exempted from their share of the general distress. Scarcely a neighbourhood in that whole extent of country, where savage cruelty could not be distinctly traced by the destruction of property and the blood of the inhabitants. The competition between the two rival governments, by preventing their union and system, greatly weakened their exertions in the common defence, and it was near the close of the war, before any accommodation was likely to take place by arrangements being made for an amicable adjustment of the boundary line.

Though this state of society was extremely disagreeable, and naturally invited to the display of an ungovernable disposition, and in fact prevented proper measures for promoting the education of youth, and while it continued discouraged ministers of the gospel from settling in the country, yet it must be acknowledged, that notwithstanding the party animosity, the controversy was conducted with a milder spirit than has been usually discovered in similar situations. Though there were some instances of opposition to the execution of the laws of the interfering states, yet there were no outrageous riots, no lives lost, no destruction of property. One person indeed lost his life at Pittsburgh in a party quarrel, but it was a private quarrel, not a riot. On the whole, crimes do not appear to have been more frequent there than in places where such circumstances did not exist. I went to reside in the western country about the time this con-

troverſy was near the concluſion, and obſerved a good deal of heat and animofity, but no violence, nor traces of it.

How different was this from other conteſts of the ſame nature. The bloodſhed and violence committed in the controverſy about the boundary line between Pennſylvania and Maryland, are ſtill remembered by the name of the Conejaghally war; ſome of the heroes, who gained their military fame by their exertions in that war, have not been many years de- ceaſed.

The conteſt between Pennſylvania and the Connecticut claimants has occaſioned bloodſhed and numerous acts of outrageous violence, both before and ſince the revolution. And notwithſtanding the decree of a court of Congreſs, determining the right of territory to be in Pennſylvania, yet that ſtate has, ſince the decree of ſettlement, been obliged to ſend different military expeditions into that country. Though conſiderable ſeverity has marked the progreſs of ſome of theſe expeditions, yet they have not proved adequate to the object. Recourſe has been had to quieting laws; but theſe, though made on the moſt generous principles, have been defeated by the claimants in whoſe favour they were made, and the commiſſioners of peace obliged to ſave their lives by flight, or be taken priſoners. Even Mr. Pickering, the then prothonotary of Luzerne county, but now the ſecretary of ſtate, when deciding on a beneficent law, which he had done much to procure in their favour, was violently ſeized and detained many days a priſoner in the woods, from whence he with difficulty eſcaped.

Nor has this controversy yet subsided. A Pennsylvanian dare not even now settle on his own land. One who lately attempted it was shot in his lodging, and though, in the opinion of the court, the murder was fully proved, a verdict could not be obtained against the criminal. A combination has long existed, and still does exist, in that country, in declared opposition to the laws, and too strong for the ordinary powers of the civil magistrate.

How different this from the conduct of the people in the western counties. There, there was no necessity to call to their aid the authority of Congress, no armies had to be marched against them, nor any unconstitutional laws passed impairing the rights of contract in their favour. They submitted to the decisions of the ordinary courts of the respective states, if not wholly without murmuring, yet without flagrant opposition or personal violence.



## C H A P. II.

*Of the State Excise Law.*

UNDER the colonial government of Pennsylvania, in the year 1756, an excise had been levied on imported spirits. The legislatures of the colonies, having no power to levy imposts at the ports, took that method of discouraging the consumption of foreign spirits and raising a revenue from it. The law was enacted for a limited time, and the revenue arising from it appropriated to the redemption of certain bills of credit. In March 1772, the former excise law was revived, and the tax was extended not only to wine, rum, and brandy, but to spirits distilled from the natural products of the province, excepting what was for the private use of the owner.

I never have understood that the law as far as it respected domestic produce was executed. I knew nothing of it at the time, and though I was acquainted with many distillers, I never heard of an excise-man visiting them. I have made enquiry, since that

time, of many who were born and resided in different counties of the province, some of whom had stills, and cannot discover that they knew any thing about the execution of that part of the law. Probably all that was distilled from domestic produce was considered as for the use of the owner, and this was indeed, in a great measure, the case, for the citizens took their rye and malt to the still, nearly on the same principles as they took their grist to the mill, and paid for the distillation either in kind or an equivalent in money. At this time rum distilled from molasses became an article of great consumption; it was purchased at from two shillings to two and sixpence per gallon by the barrel; and as it cost the farmers nothing to bring it home in the waggons with which they hauled out their flour, they found it to be more profitable than their own whiskey.

In the time of the revolutionary war, when neither foreign rum nor molasses could be imported, the demand for domestic distilled spirits for the army and for general consumption became exceeding great, and the manufacturing of it became so profitable, that not only the rye but a great quantity of wheat was consumed by distillation. In many parts of the country you could scarcely get out of sight of the smoke of a still-house. The citizens became alarmed, lest the army should suffer for want of bread for the troops, and forage for the horses. The clergy from the pulpits, and in some instances by judicial warnings of presbyteries, inveighed against this alarming destruction of bread from the army and the poor, and against the still-houses, as the general nurseries of intoxication.

and licentiousness. There was no law then in force to prevent distillers from selling in small quantities, consequently those who loved to get drunk at a small expence, resorted to the stills. The manners of our youth were much endangered by the number of the stills, and by associating with such as usually resorted to these receptacles of vice. The army soon felt the effects of this waste of grain to an alarming degree.

In March 1779, the assembly enacted a law to prevent the distillation of all kinds of grain or meal, but in October following it was repealed so far as to permit the distillation of rye and barley. The vast number of hands employed in the militia and standing army had lessened the number of labouring hands; the low price of grain at the beginning of the war had discouraged the farmers, and many through the state, who were disaffected to the revolution, or principled against war, had raised less grain than usual, with a design to prevent the army from being supplied. These circumstances, added to the consumption by distillation, gave such a serious alarm as rendered it necessary not only to discourage the distilling of grain, but to lay an embargo on the exportation of grain and flour in the port of Philadelphia. Distillation, by the abuses attending it, and exorbitant profits made by it, was become unpopular, and the necessity of a revenue was become extremely urgent to preserve the existence of the government itself.

This was undoubtedly a situation that justified on every principle the levying an excise, and this con-

viction was so general among the people, that a considerable revenue was raised from it during the continuance of the war.

In the year 1780, Congress resolved that an allowance should be made to the army for the depreciation of its pay, and required the states-respectively to liquidate and provide for the discharge of it. The State of Pennsylvania issued certificates for the liquidated depreciation, and made it optional for the holders to receive paper bills emitted on the credit of the State to the discharge of the one third of the amount; these bills being then much depreciated, though afterwards redeemed at par, many of the certificate holders declined to accept of them. A large tract of land West of the Alleghany-river, and some confiscated property, were appropriated for the final discharge of that debt; but the confiscated property was but of small value, and the mortgaged property could not then be rendered productive. When it was brought into the market several years after peace was restored, and sold by auction, only a small portion of it could be sold at any price, and what did sell went at a very low rate. The rage for land speculation had not then commenced.

The legislature always treated the depreciation as a favoured claim, and the funds appropriated for the discharge of it not being productive, on the application of the officers of the Pennsylvania line a law was passed, by which the revenue arising from the excise was appropriated to the payment of the interest and the final discharge of that debt, though every other source of revenue was then brought into operation, even to an oppressive extent,

yet the proceeds were appropriated to satisfy the requisitions of Congress, and to other indispensable purposes; consequently no provision was made for the debt due for militia services, supplies, &c. till the year 1785, when revenues were appropriated for paying the interest of both the debt of the State, and of the United States, in the hands of citizens who were original holders. A sum was also given in aid of the excise, to discharge the arrears of interest due on the depreciation debt.

If the excise tax could have been collected, it would, in a short time, not only have paid the interest, but discharged the principal of the depreciation debt. In 1786, Mr. Robert Morris made a proposal to the committee of ways and means to take it on farm, and pay into the state treasury seventy thousand pounds per annum; but farming of revenues having been practised only under despotic governments, and perhaps only practicable there, the proposal was rejected, but no doubt was entertained but that a neat sum to that amount might have been produced by it, if it could have been collected; but when it was best collected it produced only fifteen thousand pounds, and that only for two or three years; and this was chiefly raised from imported spirits and wines; but the neighbouring states not having excise laws, even the excise tax on foreign liquors was much evaded.

For some time after the settlement of the western Counties commenced, distillation was not introduced, but the spirits consumed there were brought from the east side of the mountains, and during the war little progress could be made in promoting the manufac-

ture of Spirits; consequently little attention was paid to the collection of excise in that country, though I find that the prothonotary of Westmoreland collected some in that County under his authority of collecting the tax on tavern licences. It might have been longer neglected, if the excise offices for those counties had not been urgently solicited by one Graham, who formerly kept the black-horse tavern in Market-street, and who obtained a commission for collecting the excise tax in all the western counties. A person of a more fair character and greater discretion would have been necessary for the successful discharge of that trust, but such did not apply.

Before this time, it was generally known that very little of the excise tax on domestic distilled spirits was then collected in the old settled counties; in most of them none at all. Mr. Bartholomew, the excise officer of Philadelphia, informed me that he had declined demanding it from the distillers of grain or fruit. The members of assembly from Chester county, some of whom were distillers, said that none was collected there. This was generally known to have been the case throughout the state at large, but more especially in those counties bordering on other states.

None of the neighbouring states having excise laws, rendered it the more impracticable and odious in Pennsylvania. The State of New Jersey, pressed with the debts contracted in the course of the war, and having neither commercial revenue, nor any land to dispose of, consequently having no resources from imposts or land offices, as the neighbouring states of New-York and Pennsylvania had, attempted about this time to aid her revenue

by an excise, but never could bring it into operation : It was wholly defeated in the first attempt by a powerful combination of the citizens of that state.

These circumstances were well known in the western counties, and occasioned them to be more reluctant in the payment of that tax. Those who had been prejudiced against the laws of Pennsylvania, and never experienced an excise tax, discovered a serious repugnance to the execution of it. However the distillers in Westmoreland pretty generally settled with the collector of excise, and paid him considerable sums of money. He often conversed with me on the subject, and acknowledged that he succeeded equal to his expectations.

The people however complained that the collector acted contrary to law in several instances, and he acknowledged he did to Col. Cook the Judge of the court, and told him that the magistrates ought to protect him in doing so in some instances, as it contributed to the public services. He was informed that if he did not consider himself to be bound by the laws in the discharge of his duty, he must not be surprised if the people did not regulate their conduct towards him agreeably to the laws.

However he met with no interruption, till some time after at the court of Westmoreland, when in the evening a man in disguise, supported by several others, called him to the door of his chamber, and attempted to pull him out, telling him that he was Belzebub, and would deliver him to a number of other devils who waited for him without. But the collector being armed with pistols stood on his defence, and with the assist-

ance of some in the room kept them out, nor would he suffer those in the room to go out during the night.

The collector commenced a prosecution against the person, who, he supposed, personated Belzebub, and some others, but satisfactory proof being given to the court, that the collector had mistaken the person, he was of course acquitted, and the collector's character was so freely treated by some of the gentlemen of the bar, that he left the court as soon as he perceived his mistake was discovered. An imputation of a mistake of that kind had been alleged against him formerly. To do him justice however, I suspect that he rather mistook the time than the person. Greater mistakes of the same nature have since been made by others.

Some time after this, however, he met with worse treatment in Washington county. He was there attacked by a mob, who, after shaving him, cutting off his hair, and dressing his horse's mane and tail in such a manner as to disfigure him, brought him into Westmoreland county and let him go. No doubt other attempts were made to intimidate and discourage him, but I have neither heard from himself nor any other person, of any subsequent outrages committed against him. I have never understood how much money he received. I believe in some instances he compounded for what he could get without trouble, and as there was no check on him, he probably detained the largest share of the money in his own hands. When the su-



preme judges came to hold a court of Oyer and Terminer in Washington, he commenced a prosecution against twelve persons, who were convicted and fined, and compelled to pay high damages to the collector, which I am informed he received, and then resigned his commission.

Afterwards, a man of the name of Craig accepted of the office of excise for the western counties. His son, who acted as his deputy, I was acquainted with; he behaved himself well, and appeared to be successful; but his father getting into some quarrels, near the place of his residence, complaints went against him, and he was removed.

The representatives from these counties were much importuned to have the law repealed, but this could not be done until some other fund could be procured to appropriate as a substitute, and all the other funds were at this time overburthened. They were mortified however to see the authority of the state degraded by the non-execution of the excise law; To remedy this evil several unsuccessful endeavours were made to revise the law, and to procure more respectable officers.

John Baird, Esq. then a member of the supreme executive council of the state, and myself, applied to a respectable person, well known in that country, and obtained his consent to serve, but when the commission arrived he declined accepting it. Before the law was repealed, another person, well qualified for the appointment, accepted of it, and kept his office for some time in Pittsburgh, but soon resigned it.

There were no riots but those I have mentioned against Graham ; but as all those who held the office received some money, for which it was believed they never accounted, (probably they did not receive more than was a competent compensation), those that paid at first, seeing others escape with impunity, refused to comply. They all knew, that in the old counties it was generally paid only on foreign liquors.

Some may wish to know how the people in so remote a country knew so well what was done in the eastern counties. It is necessary they should be informed, that a great proportion of the western farmers usually go over the mountains, every year after feeding time, to bring up their salt, when they generally visit their friends, where they formerly resided, and are informed of the news of the country. All the salt, and many other articles consumed in the western counties, are purchased from the storekeepers on the east side of the mountains, and carried to the western counties on horse-back, in cags, or bags. In this way they have to carry it from above one to two hundred miles.

It was long expected, that the thirteen states would agree to vest Congress with the power of levying an impost on goods imported. Under this impression the funding law of the state was enacted in 1785. The depreciation debt had been funded before, and one year's interest had been paid on a great part of the domestic debt. This had been done with a view to equalize the distresses of the citizens, and

give a check to the prevailing speculations on certificates, and raise the price in the market of those which had not been alienated, till Congress could provide otherwise for them, which was then daily expected to be put in their power by the thirteenth state agreeing to the five per cent. impost.

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### C H A P. III.

WHEN the federal government was organised, and before provision had been made for the public debt, the assembly of Pennsylvania repealed the law for levying a direct tax, and left the excise unrepealed. This measure was much influenced by one of the members of Congress, who resided in the city, and had newly returned from congress at New-York; the same who always introduced the measures, originated by the secretary of the treasury, in the form of resolves, in the House of Representatives; but it was opposed by a numerous minority, of which the western members composed a part. They wished to continue the direct tax a year longer, that the earliest opportunity might be taken of repealing the excise law. So much embarrassed were the revenues of the state by the premature repeal of the direct tax, that in the next session the legislature had to borrow sixty thousand pounds from the Bank of North America on mortgage, and to negotiate with the late proprietaries,

to get them to receive certificates instead of cash, for a debt due them by the commonwealth. How far disappointing the public creditors of the state, by prematurely embarrassing its revenues, and continuing the state excise when the direct tax was repealed, was intended to promote the plan for assuming the state debt, and levying a general excise, which transpired soon after, the reader who has been attentive to those measures in their progress will be able to judge for himself.

It is well known, that the plan reported by the secretary of the treasury to the second session of the first Congress was rejected at that time, and again brought forward in the last session of that Congress, and enacted into a law, Congress then sitting in Philadelphia.

The legislature of the state being then also in session, the members of the house of representatives became exceedingly alarmed at the introduction of an excise, and adopted resolutions expressive of their sense of the excise bill then before Congress. The resolves were designed to have been sent to the Senate of the United States, not as instructions by which they were to be bound, but as a declaration of the sense and wishes of the state of Pennsylvania respecting an excise system.

The substance of these resolutions were: First, A declaration of a right in the state legislature to give an opinion on every thing of a public nature which has a tendency to destroy the rights of the people: Second, That the proceedings of Congress, tending to the collection of a revenue by means of an excise, ought to attract the attention of the house: Third, That

no public emergency then existed to warrant the adoption of any species of taxation, that would violate the rights which were the basis of the government, and thereby exhibit the singular spectacle, of a nation opposing the oppression of others, to enslave itself.

In the discussion of these resolutions there were none who argued in favour of the excise. The objections were confined to the right of the house to interfere in federal measures. I was a member at the time, and voted in favour of the resolutions; but had at first some difficulty with respect to the right of interference. Since that time we find, however, that other state legislatures have frequently interfered, by giving their opinion on important federal measures, without being censured for it. The Yeas and Nays were taken on the resolutions, and the reasons given at large on the journals. By the journals of that session of the house of representatives of the General Assembly, it appears, that there were forty votes in favour of the resolutions, and sixteen against them. Some, at least, of the minority were as much opposed to the excise as those who voted in the majority, but thought the interference improper. The name of John Nevil, now inspector of the western survey, stands with the majority. Considering the difficulty of the question of interference, this was a very unanimous declaration of the representatives of Pennsylvania, and could not be ascribed to the influence of a faction. The truth is, the resolutions were moved and seconded, and zealously supported by Col. Gurney and Mr. Richard Wells, of the city of Philadelphia, well known to be respectable citizens and zealous federalists. They

were also supported by consultations with other inhabitants of the city, at the Coffee-house, where the principles of excises were discussed freely, and at these consultations, and in the debates in the House of Representatives, the testimony given by the old Congress against excises was much relied on. The western members did not assist at the consultations at the Coffee-house.

A great proportion of the people of Pennsylvania had expressed their sense of the excise law, by the alarm they discovered on receiving information of the secretary's report in favour of an excise system, and the joy they expressed at hearing that it was rejected. This circumstance gave the members of assembly a good opportunity to know the sentiments of the people on the subject, and this disposition was not confined to any particular place. Only one member from the city of Philadelphia, and two from the county, voted against the resolutions, and but one member from the western counties voted in their favour.

The first ill treatment given to an exciseman under the federal law was in Chester county, but the rioters were convicted, and punished severely by the state courts. On that occasion, the foreman of the jury told the Attorney-general, that he was as much, or more, opposed to the excise law, than the rioters, but would not suffer violations of the laws to go unpunished. I expect sensible jurors every where would act from the same laudable principle. There were several other attacks made on excise officers in other parts on the east side of the mountains, which it is not necessary to be particular in stating.

The people in the western counties anticipated their experiencing peculiar hardships from the excise. Without money, or the means of procuring it, and consuming their whiskey only in their families or using it as an article of barter, which, though it in some respects answered the place of money, yet would not be received in pay for the excise tax, they thought it hard to pay as much tax on what sold with them but at from two shillings, to two shillings and six pence, as they did where it brought double that price. These, and such like arguments, were not new. I found them in use against the state excise when I went to reside in that country. They arose from their situation, and the simplest person feeling their force, knew how to use them.

Some talked of laying aside their still altogether, till they would have time to observe the effects of the law on other places, and have time to reflect on the subject; and this method was advised, in preference to a more violent mode of opposition, by some who were apprehensive of outrages being committed. But though several peaceable men laid aside their stills or sold them, yet there never was any association or resolutions among the inhabitants to that purpose. The contrary has been asserted by pretty high authority.

In the month of June 1791, the first year on which the stills were to have been entered there were no offices of inspection opened in the western counties: And though the people were in great consternation, no public or general consultation was held on the subject, till the latter end of July following, when a meeting was advertised to be held at Red-stone old fort.



Individuals attended from different places, but not by delegation, and, being in harvest, few attended from a distance. There were four or five from Westmoreland, few from Allegany, or the distant parts of Washington or Fayette. The hardships, naturally resulting from the execution of the excise law to that country, were explained, but at the same time the constitutional authority of Congress to enact it was asserted. It was resolved to petition Congress for relief, and no petition being prepared, a committee was appointed to meet at Pittsburgh to draught one. The committee was also authorized to correspond with the citizens in other places, who might be disposed to petition Congress on the subject, and it was recommended to the different counties to appoint committees to superintend the signing the petitions and forwarding them to Congress.

How this meeting could have been ranked by the secretary of the treasury, in his report to the President, preparatory to calling out the militia, among the causes of the insurrection, and given as one of the instances of unlawful combination, I know not. Surely such a meeting may be held, and such resolves passed, in Great Britain, even after the sedition bills, which have thrown that nation into such a flame, are enacted into laws. I never knew that a meeting to petition government respectfully, was esteemed criminal in any country that had the least pretensions to freedom.

The truth is, as far as I was acquainted with the design of that meeting, it was intended to promote submission, and not opposition, to the law. There was

no other alternative ; for to have argued that the law was just and salutary, would have had no effect ; nor did I know of any person then in the country that approved of, or advocated it as a good law. Some, who wrote in favour of submission to the excise law, in the Pittsburgh Gazette, were present at the Red-stone meeting.

Several of those who kept the largest distilleries, that I was acquainted with in these counties, designed at that time to enter their stills, if there was an opportunity. Some of these however afterwards changed their mind. Many of the uninformed people, being told by the warm advocates of the federal government, that after it was ratified we would have no more excises, considered the excise law therefore as unconstitutional. At the Red-stone meeting this mistake was openly combated. It is not easy to convince people that a law, in their opinion unjust and oppressive in its operation, is at the same time constitutional.

In August a committee met at Washington, agreeably to the recommendation of the Red-stone meeting, and in September a committee, composed of persons from the western counties, met at Pittsburgh. I presume none of them were delegated, except perhaps from Washington county, for only in it had there been a county committee. From Westmoreland there was but one person, and he was not delegated.

A petition was proposed by the general committee at Pittsburgh to be signed by the people, and several resolves were published in the gazettee, some

of which were intemperately expressed, and respected subjects but little connected with the excise law, such as the salaries of office, the funding system, &c.

About eleven months after, in August 1792, a number of persons, from Washington, Fayette, and Allegany counties, formed the second and last committee of that kind that was held at Pittsburgh. They prepared and published another petition to Congress, praying for the repeal of the excise law, to be signed by the people. The committee also published its sentiments on the principles of taxation, and the supposed impropriety and injustice of an excise system. Though it did not censure any other measures of government, it resolved to take all legal methods of obstructing the operation of the excise law, and to have no fellowship with such as accepted offices under it, and to withdraw from them every assistance, to withhold the comforts of life, &c. They also recommended to the people to follow their example. A similar resolution had been published by the committee of Washington, about a year before.

I never knew that this example was followed by the people in any instance, or that the resolution was obeyed by even all the members of the committee.

On the ground of discretion these resolutions were censurable, and were in fact disapproved by many through the state, who also heartily disliked the excise law. That they were not, however, contrary to law, is acknowledged by the secretary himself, who informs us of his procuring testimony, in order to prosecute the persons who composed the committee; but he adds, that the attorney general did not think it actionable. There

is no doubt but it is morally wrong in many cases to refuse our charity or assistance to any of our fellow men, when their necessities require it; but these duties being of imperfect obligation, we are only responsible to our own conscience and the opinion of the world for the proper discharge of them. There are no doubt persons in society whose manners are so disagreeable, or their character so objectionable, as to justify us in resolving to have no fellowship with them; and where the excise law is almost universally believed to be unjust and oppressive, men of this description will be found pretty readily among the excise officers. Indeed this observation need not be restricted to places so situated; it corresponds with the sentiments of people generally, where excises have been long established, and is the language of their laws.

These resolutions, however, were censurable on the ground of policy. They disgusted those members of Congress, that would otherwise have been disposed to have eased, if not to have fully relieved, them from their grounds of complaint, and offended the citizens at large, who had sympathized with them; in short, they undoubtedly occasioned less respect to be paid to their petitions.

A desultory meeting was held, in consequence of an advertisement, in Allegany county; it formed rules of association, and published some intemperate resolutions, but never had a second meeting. Col. Morton, the chairman, near whose residence the meeting was held, behaved always in an orderly manner, and discovered great firmness and discretion through the whole of the insurrection. A meeting was advertised to have been held

at Greensburgh, in the same winter, James Guthry, chairman; but the supposed chairman contradicted the advertisement in the next week's gazette, denying that there was any such meeting, or that he was chairman, and we heard no more of it. It may be remarked, that Guthry has uniformly supported the character of a good citizen. In short, there was a disposition prevailing with a few people to have the country organized into committees, but not exclusively to oppose the excise. The wages of the assembly-men had been raised the year before, and people living at such a distance from market, having the necessaries of life cheap, and not being sensible of the increased expence of living in Philadelphia, were offended. From this circumstance a greater number than usual wished to bring themselves forward as candidates, not to lower, but to receive, the high wages; to take a lead in committees seemed a probable means of success. This circumstance was suspected to have promoted the progress of the disturbances in some places, but the conduct of these characters came into disrepute soon enough to prevent their success.

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C H A P. IV.

**I** CANNOT discover that the meetings I have mentioned had any influence in promoting the insurrection, or connection with it. They were not sanctioned by the people, nor was there even the appearance of the people assembling to elect the persons of which they were composed.

Though I have said, that the resolves published by these meetings were intemperate and impolitic, yet they are not without the patronage of respectable precedents, or rather examples, given by respectable and influential characters, even in our own country.

In the year 1777, the darkest period of the late war, when the state of Pennsylvania was daily in danger of invasion, and the government newly put into operation, a number of the most wealthy and respectable characters in the state, chiefly in the city of Philadelphia, entered into resolutions, with the declared intention of opposing, not a law, but the government

itself. They refused to hold offices under it, and, if I remember well, to associate with those who did. I do not bring in this example as a justification of the conduct of the other ; it had a very bad effect in weakening the operations of the government at a time to the last degree critical. Yet, if I am not mistaken, a respectable judge of the supreme court of the United States, and the late supervisor of the district of Pennsylvania, were among the leading members of that association. This instance ought to be improved as a warning, and not as a precedent. In Britain we observe the people, through the whole nation, convening either in associations or occasional meetings, in vast multitudes, to censure the conduct of administration, and petition against the sedition bills ; and we see these assemblies publicly patronised by the first nobility and most influential commoners of the nation. So far is this from being censured by the ministry, that they are equally industrious in procuring popular meetings to approve of their measures. This is no new thing in that nation. The sense of the nation, given in that manner, has often not only prevented bills being enacted, but has frequently procured the repeal of obnoxious laws. To prove this, many other instances might be mentioned.

It is true, it may be plead that popular meetings are often conducted with indiscretion, and have a tendency to promote licentiousness. This is admitted ; but it does not therefore follow, that such meetings should be prohibited by law or denounced by government. Doing so, would be reducing the people to

mere machines, and subverting the very existence of liberty. It is the duty of the legislature not only to accommodate the laws to the people's interests, but even, as far as possible, to their preconceptions; for as a republican government rests on the people's confidence, whatever weakens that confidence saps the foundations of the government as effectually as treason and rebellion, though not so rapidly. There are few instances of treason and rebellion which may not be traced to indiscreet laws as their source. It is generally one indiscretion exciting another.

It will not do to say, that to hold meetings to remonstrate against the passing of a law is admissible, but that to remonstrate against an existing law is improper. Such doctrine in this extensive country is absurd, for it must always happen, that a great proportion of the people, who are to be governed by the laws, know nothing about them till they are enacted or in operation, consequently cannot petition against their passage.

It is equally absurd to assert, that because our laws are enacted by our own representatives, therefore we ought to submit to them without remonstrance, till our representatives, who know our circumstances, and partake of our interests, think proper to repeal them. This doctrine is supported by a presumption, that a government of representatives can never mistake the true interests of their constituents, nor be corrupted or fall into partial combinations, whereas the contrary is presumable from the nature of man, and verified by immemorial experience.



If the people have a right to petition for the repeal of a law, or remonstrate against its injustice or inexpediency, surely they have a right to meet, publish their sentiments, and correspond through the whole extent of the country affected by the laws, without the imputation of combining against the government. Their characters indeed are responsible to public opinion for the indiscreet use of that right, and their persons and property to the laws for the infractions committed on them.

Experience will not justify the claim of implicit obedience to the laws even of a representative legislature. Even in such there may be combinations so strong as to subvert the constitution itself; and as the disposal of the public property and the administration of the national force is necessarily vested in the government, temptations, too strong for the ordinary portion of virtue enjoyed by mankind, may present themselves too successfully to the avarice or ambition of those vested with the power of dispensing the public will. Instances of this are to be found in the history of all nations, and proofs of it are not wanting even among ourselves, though as a nation we are yet in our infancy.

In Georgia, we see the legislature the sellers, and the members of the legislature and officers of the state, together with influential officers of the general government, the purchasers of land, to an amount unknown in the history of contracts. In consequence of this enormous speculation we see the people agitated to a degree of madness, and the succeeding legislature not only repealing the law, but crazing the

memorials of it from their journals. How much better would it have been, how much more honourable to the state, to have listened to the remonstrances of the people in time. The government of Georgia is a fair and full representation of the people, and yet here we find a powerful lesson against the claim of implicit confidence in the wisdom of representative legislatures.

But we need not look to the state of Georgia alone for instances. The conduct there differs only in degree from what had previously taken place in other states. On examination it will be found, that generally where any of our governments had a subject of speculation at their disposal, much of it has found its way into the hands of such as had the disposal of it, or their favourites. The land-offices of different states, even Pennsylvania itself, may be cited in proof of this doctrine.

Where a large territory is subject to a representative legislature, it is sometimes very difficult to accommodate general laws to the various interests and prepossessions of the different parts. In this case, it becomes the legislature to prefer what is most evidently just and practicable to that which refined politicians may judge expedient. The greatest danger to republican governments arise from combinations and political finesse. If the people have not so much good sense as to submit to exactions, or support measures that are reasonably just and necessary, they are not fit for a republican government. It is of importance that the necessity of measures which press hard on the people should be evident; and generally matters of

urgent necessity are easily explained to the comprehensions of the people. When this is done they are generally found willing to submit to any burden.

This observation was verified in the course of the late war. When the Congress-money ceased to be a useful circulating medium, the people in those states, whose legislatures made exertions, submitted to pay an amount of taxes that will scarcely be credited in future time; and they did this without giving the governments any difficulty, until they became apprehensive that the fruits of their earnings went chiefly into the hands of speculators. Yet in one state only did this promote an insurrection. It is acknowledged that the oppression in Massachusetts was exorbitant before it produced opposition, and that the insurrection in that state was preceded by a long course of complaints and evident discontents. The legislature removed the causes of complaint after the opposition was subdued, and the insurgents were treated with lenity. The conduct of that state on this trying occasion reflects honour on republican government; still more happy, however, would it have been, if, by giving more early relief, the insurrection had been prevented. The citizens will bear amazing burdens in times of public emergency, or for the immediate discharge of debts contracted from evident necessity; but when once the impression of necessity is removed from their minds, and especially when the claims have become the objects of speculation, the people generally have not discernment enough to approve even of necessary arrangements for the support of public credit. Though they have pretty accurate ideas of justice or equity in the abstract,

yet they cannot trace it through the refined mazes of a policy necessary for funding systems. Indeed, to carry these systems to any great extent, the government should possess not only all the internal resources of revenue without competition, but also all other internal governmental powers and patronage to the utmost extent.

It is a doctrine now avowed in the British parliament, that when laws are enacted dangerous to the liberty and interests of the people, submission to them is not a question of morality but of prudence. Perhaps government should always act under impressions of the truth of this position, but the citizens should examine it with the utmost caution before they reduce it to practice.

We are certainly under a moral obligation to preserve our own life and the life of our neighbours. Every instance of actual opposition to government, obliges it to have recourse to force and coercion for its own preservation, for the authority of government cannot be distinguished from the government itself. Though forcible opposition has often been made to particular laws, without the remotest intention in those who opposed the law to overturn the government, yet it is not to be supposed, that those who administer the government will be moved to change their measures by a defiance of their power to support them. Nor indeed can this be done in a republican government, without such an imputation of weakness as will invite to forcible opposition from every discontented party. Therefore citizens who conceive themselves oppressed by partial laws, should consider, that a de-

fiance of the power of government; by forcible opposition to the authority of the laws, eventually leads to hostility and bloodshed, and that there is no telling the end of those measures from their beginning. Every thing that has a tendency to agitate the public mind to an unusual degree, ought to be avoided, because when the mind is highly agitated with respect to public measures it is too much disturbed to judge deliberately, and is predisposed to act without discretion. The public mind may be agitated by those who cannot direct or controul its exertions. We are under a moral obligation to respect government, not only as a divine ordinance, but also as a moral compact, binding the people to one another for its support.

It is certain, however, that the government and laws of some countries are not worth preserving, and even where a government is good in itself it may be perverted in the administration. As it is for the promoting of mutual happiness and security only that government is valuable, therefore the power of altering or amending governments is expressly declared to be in the people, who are the judges of their own happiness, by some constitutions. It is, however, radically in them, whether expressed in a written instrument or not.

When the change of a government, a revolt from it, or a temporary opposition to its laws, such as the opposition of the colonies to the stamp and tea acts was, is believed to be morally right, it is yet a matter of the greatest delicacy, to calculate with accuracy with respect to the prudence or policy of commencing the opposition contemplated. When the mind is highly

agitated, it is very unfit to examine the resources to support opposition, or to calculate with precision the probable consequences of it. That this was the case in the late insurrection will appear evident in the sequel.

But if those who administer the government attempt to issue denunciations against the liberty of expressing opinions of their measures and objects, or to prescribe rules by which men must be regulated in expressing their opinions, the very attempt will increase the evil it is intended to correct. When those in trust attempt to exercise authority over the discretion of the citizens, otherwise than in the unequivocal language of the laws, as the attempt cannot be supported by coercion it will only bring the measures of government into contempt, and operate as a stimulus to indiscreet censure. Instances might be given in proof of this observation if it were necessary. Candid investigations of the measures of government have their uses even though they may be mistaken, and scurrilous writings, though they are pernicious in themselves, can do little harm; they rather attach people of discernment more closely to the government. Those who conduct the measures, and dispense the favours of government, have generally the advantage in newspaper writings; not only men of discretion, who approve of the measures, will write in their favour, but panegyrists, sycophants, and even the greatest masters in the arts of scurrility, will generally be found on the side of government in every country, whether its measures be good or bad. And though sometimes indeed a Junius may start up on the other side;

this is rare; and the writers in favour of government often treat respectable citizens and the mass of the people with great freedom, and generally escape the denunciations of those entrusted with the public administration. It is never a good omen when the measures of government are in danger of suffering by investigation.

The meetings which have been enumerated I consider as lawful and harmless in themselves; but some of their resolutions, as I have before observed, were censurable in point of discretion. It is my own opinion, that if they had been more generally attended by men of discretion, they might have been advantageous. They were not permanent associations.

There was, however, an association of a more permanent nature commenced in the winter previous to the insurrection. A great proportion of the Mingo creek regiment of militia became members of it. It is said, that during its existence it was frequently attended by three hundred persons. The rules of this institution, and various powers which it is reported to have exercised, imitated the language, and assumed the forms of regularly constituted authority. This association never was announced in the newspapers, and its existence was known to but few.

Though the whole country disapproved of the excise, yet the people in the settlement where this association was formed, seem to have been more zealous in their disapprobation of it than many others. It is true, their rules did not apply particularly against the excise, nor contain any thing unlawful, yet the circumstance of being associated made them formida-

ble in what they undertook, and encouraged them to undertake what they otherwise would not have done as individuals.

It is in this that the difference between occasional societies and permanent associations consist. In Massachusetts, where the people of every town is incorporated into a permanent association, when they undertake any thing, either good or bad, they act with greater vigour. By this means it was that they made such glorious exertions at the commencement of the revolution, and by the same means also the insurrection in that state became so formidable, and was conducted with so much system.

It has been generally said, that one object of their association was to prevent people from committing outrages on excisemen. This might have been the object of a number of the associates, and it might have produced this effect for some time. Perhaps it was owing to this that general Nevil was not attacked at his own house sooner, for undoubtedly there was greater resentment against him than any of his deputies, for reasons that I shall mention in the sequel; and it does appear that designs were entertained against him by some of the associates previous to the attack on his house. This association was the more dangerous that it was secret. And though, as has been observed, it was not actively concerned in many of the outrages preceding the insurrection, yet various concurring circumstances render it more than probable, that that unfortunate event was principally to be ascribed to its instrumentality.



## C H A P. V.

THE first actual outrage was committed in September 1791, on a Robert Johnson, collector of excise for Washington and Allegany counties, by a party of armed men disguised. The attack was made on him near Pigeon creek. After cutting his hair, they tarred and feathered him, and in this situation compelled him to walk some distance.

The next act of violence was committed on a man of the name of Wilson, who was in some measure disordered in his intellects, and affected to be, perhaps thought he was, an excise-man, and was making enquiry for distillers. He was pursued by a party, taken out of his bed, and carried several miles to a smith's shop; there they striped off his cloaths and burnt them, and burning him in several places with a hot iron, they tarred and feathered, and in that situation dismissed him.

Not long after this, one Rossberry suffered the punishment of tarring and feathering for advocating

the excise law. An armed banditti seized and carried off two persons who were witnesses in the case of Wilson, who had been abused by the rioters. A formidable attempt was made to seize the inspector himself in Washington town, where he was expected, by a numerous party disguised. He had been apprised of their coming, and did not attend at the office. In August 1792, capt. Faulkner, who had let his house to the inspector to hold his office in, was attacked on the road by a person with a drawn knife, and threatened that his house should be burned for permitting an office of inspection to be held in it. He escaped, on giving a promise to prevent the further use of his house for an office, and accordingly gave public notice in the newspapers, that the office should be no longer kept in his house.

In April 1793, an armed party attacked the house of Wells, whose residence is in Fayette county, but did not find him at home. They broke open the house and threatened the family. On the 22d of November following, the house of Wells was attacked again, in the night. They then obliged him to surrender his commission and books, and required him to publish a resignation of his office, within two weeks, in the newspapers, on pain of having his house burned.

James Kiddoe and William Coughran, who had entered their mills, were first threatened, and afterwards attacked. Some pieces of the grist-mill of the former were carried away, and the still of the latter was destroyed, his saw-mill rendered useless, and his grist-mill materially injured; and he was ordered to

publish what he had suffered in the Pittsburgh Gazette.

An armed party in disguise, attacked and broke into the house of John Lynn, where the office was kept, and after prevailing on him to come down stairs, they tied and threatened to hang him; then took him to the woods, cut off his hair, tarred and feathered him, and swore him never to disclose their names, or permit an excise office to be held in his house; and binding him to a tree, left him in that situation till morning, when he extricated himself. These outrages all happened south of the Monongahela.

In June 1794, Wells, the collector for Westmoreland and Fayette counties, opened his office, at the house of a certain Philip Regan in Westmoreland county. The house was at different times attacked by armed men in the night, who frequently fired on it; but they were always repulsed by P. Regan and Wells the younger.

I have taken this enumeration from the secretary's report. However, I have passed one instance mentioned by him, viz. that Wells the collector was injuriously treated at Greensburgh, in Westmoreland, in 1792. I passed it, because I was convinced it was without foundation. On the most minute enquiry, I have not found the smallest trace of any injury or insult that he received there; nay, he got assurances that none in the town would injure him. He was told indeed, in friendly conversation, that they could not undertake for other parts of the county, and that since no person in the county would accept of the office, he might conclude that his holding it there would

not be acceptable. Though the man's person was little known in that county, yet few were strangers to his personal character previous to his obtaining the office.

The account of his being ill treated at Greenburgh, is connected by the secretary with a similar assertion respecting the treatment he received at Union Town, in Fayette county. This, however, also appears to have but little foundation. On the first day appointed for entering the stills, a number of distillers attended ; but the collector did not appear. On the second day, for he was to have attended one day in the week, a greater number of distillers appeared ; but the collector was not to be found, though called and diligent enquiry made for him. He was known to be a timid man, and very probably was afraid of their numbers, and this might have been the reason why a greater number attended the second day ; but they were neither armed with weapons nor threats. When he undertook the office he ought to have discovered more boldness and less apprehension. This conduct invited to further insults. I am persuaded, that at this time no plan for attacking or mal-treating excise-men had been concerted or matured by the distillers.

When either public or private trusts are undertaken by men who dislike the business themselves, they cannot be expected to discharge it with energy. To obtain the compensation will be their principal aim, and all their efforts will be directed to that object. It will be the same with such as possess neither principle nor sense of honour, and such may be expected

to obtain offices where the field for selection is very much narrowed. How far this observation will apply to the case of the excise officers in the western counties, will be seen in its proper place.

In two instances, the barns of persons who had given information against offenders, &c. in Allegany county, were burnt, probably by the offenders themselves, though this could not be proved. Some other injuries were committed, and threats were published in the newspapers, under the signature of Tom the Tinker. These threats, contained in letters signed by Tom the Tinker, were directed to certain persons, with express orders to have them published; and the editor of the Pittsburgh Gazette did not think it prudent to refuse to admit them. I cannot give a better account of the famous signature of Tom Tinker, which figured so highly about this time, than by adopting the words of Mr. Brackenridge on that subject.

“ A term had come into popular use before this  
“ time, to designate the opposition to the excise law ;  
“ it was that of Tom the Tinker. It was not given,  
“ as the appellation of whig originally was, as a term  
“ of reproach for adversaries; but assumed by the peo-  
“ ple who were active in some of the masked riots,  
“ which took place at an early period. A certain John  
“ Holcroft was thought to have made the first applica-  
“ tion of it. It was at the time of the masked at-  
“ tack on a certain William Coughran, who rendered  
“ himself obnoxious by the entry of his stills; and the  
“ menders, of course, must be tinkers, and the name,  
“ collectively, became Tom the Tinker. Advertise-

"ments were put up on the trees, and in the high ways, or in other conspicuous places, under the signature of Tom the Tinker, threatening individuals, or admonishing them in measures with regard to the excise law." *Incidents, page 79.*

It afterwards appeared that they did not originate with Holcroft, though the inventor of them has never been discovered; these letters were only made use of in the settlements adjacent to the Monongahela, till after the insurrection broke out. Then, however, they were sent to distant places.

In the latter end of 1793 and the beginning of 1794, there appeared to be a very general wish among the distillers, and other people of reflection, that the stills should be entered, and a general submission to the law enforced. They were convinced, that the desultory, outrageous, and incendiary opposition that was given to the execution of the law, was likely to introduce a very bad state of society. That it was putting it in the power of bad men, emboldened by the habit of committing daring outrages, to disturb the peace of society, and to render the enjoyment of life and property insecure. They knew that though the present outrages were only directed against the execution of the excise law, if these escaped with impunity, the execution of every other law might share the same fate in its turn. The demand for whiskey for the supply of the army put it in the power of the distillers to procure cash for the payment of the excise tax, and the contractor confining his purchases to spirits on which the excise had been paid, gave a powerful inducement to a compliance with the law.

With a view to promote this compliance, a number of the most influential persons including a number of the most respectable distillers, agreed to promote submission to the excise laws, on condition that a total change was made in the officers, and such men put into office as the people could confide in ; they also expressed their willingness to recommend such characters and render themselves responsible for their fidelity. This agreement was entered into at the court of Fayette county, in the winter or spring previous to the insurrection. I had the first information of it from James Ross, Esq. senator of the United States, who had been present and contributed to this agreement, before he came to the senate in April 1794. I asked him how far the change of the officers was intended to go, and if they were confident they could procure good men to accept of the offices. He told me the change was intended to go to all the officers of the survey, and that they were confident of being able to procure such as would faithfully discharge the duties of the respective offices, and enjoy the confidence of the people, and he asked me if I could recommend such for Westmoreland county. I told him that having been long from home, and having no opportunity of consulting, I could not recommend : That if I did recommend a good man without knowing whether he would serve or not, and he declined it, it would render it more difficult to get another to accept of it. I had experienced this inconveniency under the state excise.

This disposition coming to the knowledge of those who were obstinate and undiscerning, and who had already committed excesses, they became more out-

rigorous, proceeded to fresh acts of violence, and expressed as great a degree of resentment against those who complied with the law as they did against the officers who acted under it. The exertions of those who opposed the law being the result of an infatuated state of mind and a mistaken zeal were vigorous, and being conducted in a clandestine manner, there could be no defence against their effects; this increased the disposition of discreet men to submit, but it deterred them from actually entering their stills. They were surprised that no coercive exertions were made by the federal judiciary in support of the law, and those who complied with the duties it required. About that time I received letters from different distillers near Loyalhanna in Westmoreland county, requesting my opinion both as to their best mode of proceeding, and whether government was likely to make any exertion to put the law in execution, and protect those who were willing to submit; for though there had been no riots in that part of the country, neither had there been any office of inspection, nor entries of stills; but they had heard of the treatment those had met with who entered them in other counties, and did not know but they might be treated in the same manner. I informed them that it was their duty to enter their stills whether they used them or not, that there was no ground to expect that the law would be either repealed, or altered in that respect, during that session of Congress, but referred to themselves to judge of the safety of their persons or property. I had suspected no danger of that kind in that part of the country when I left home. With respect to the opportunity of entering, that laying with the inspector, I



could tell nothing about it. Some of those in the mean time, compounding privately for the excise in Pittsburgh, sold their liquor to the contractors. They would have much rather entered their stills; but even selling their liquors to the contractors raised suspicions against them, and occasioned threats from a distance and resentment from some of their neighbours, and rendered it necessary for them to temporize, during the troubles that followed, more than they otherwise would have done. The new alterations in the excise law were not enacted till some time in the month of June, and could not be known at that distance till after that month was expired.

From the relation already given, it is evident, that an opposition to, or non-compliance with, the execution of the excise law, had existed in the western counties of Pennsylvania, for the space of three years; or, to use the expressions of the secretary of the treasury, "The opposition to those laws in the four western counties of Pennsylvania, was as early as they were known to have passed. It has continued, with different degrees of violence in the different counties, and at different periods.—But Washington has uniformly distinguished its resistance, by a more excessive spirit than has appeared in the other counties, and seems to have been chiefly instrumental in kindling, and keeping alive the flame."

There might be some difference of opinion between the secretary and others, about the instances that are entitled to the term opposition. Perhaps, circulation of opinion, or declaration of sentiments, and every lawful means of promoting remonstrances

against it, or petitions for its repeal, or even resolving to cease from distilling, if that had been done, might be better expressed by the term disapprobation. But not to contend about this, it will be admitted, that the attack on Robert Johnson, on the 6th of September 1791, and all the subsequent acts of violence, were acts of opposition to that law, and were so many defiances to the power of the judicial authority of the United States. Various and flagrant instances of opposition I have already recited, till I have brought the narrative to the avenue of that crisis, when the opposition burst forth with an explosion, that, as has been said by respectable authority, electrified the whole United States. It remains to be enquired, what means the responsible head of the executive department exerted, to coerce this opposition, and to prevent its more general spread.

## C H A P. VI.

THE first instance that we find of coercion having been attempted, was the sending Joseph Fox, deputy marshal, to serve processes issued by the district court against the persons concerned in the riot on Johnson. He went to the inspector, and on his advice returned home again without going to the proper place, or attempting to serve the writs; but with the inspector's advice also, he sent the processes under cover as private letters, by a poor simple man, who had been usually employed in driving cattle, &c. If the inspector could have contrived a surer method to degrade the government in the esteem of the rioters, and invite insults, it is beyond my comprehension; and unhappily the poor man, who was ignorant of what he was doing, was the victim of this injudicious plan.

What better could the inspector expect. If the people were well disposed where the process was to be served, why discourage the deputy marshal from go-

ing forward? If they were not well disposed, why send a poor creature who, not knowing what he delivered, could not give testimony of his having served the processes? Would not this contemptible method of serving processes irritate even a well disposed man on whom it was served? The authority of a commission from government, and the respectability attached thereby to the person that bears it, generally procures a degree of reverence to an officer of justice. The sheriff or constable will be respected when the officious bum will probably be well flogged, but in this instance the poor man was taken for a bum and treated accordingly, without knowing the nature of the service he was employed about. He was seized, whipped, tarred and feathered, and it is said that his money was taken from him, and finally, being blindfolded, he was tied in the woods, and remained in that situation for five hours.

No farther exertion was made on the part of government till the fall of the year 1792, that the supervisor of the revenue was sent "to ascertain the real state of the survey, to obtain evidence of the persons who were concerned in Faulkner's case, and of those who composed the meeting at Pittsburgh, to uphold the confidence and encourage the perseverance of the officers acting under the law, and to induce if possible the inhabitants of that part of the survey, which appeared least disinclined, to come voluntarily into the measure, by arguments addressed to their sense of duty, and exhibiting the eventual dangers and mischiefs of resistance."

I wish for the sake of the personal respect I have long entertained for the supervisor of the revenue, and his family, that he had not introduced his journey

to Pittsburgh, and put me to the disagreeable necessity of animadverting on it. Were I indeed to relate it in the manner I have heard it described, the reader would be induced to think it a romance rather than a real narrative. It is sufficient for my purpose to state that he went to Pittsburgh in the most clandestine manner possible, confined himself within a very narrow circle of the citizens while he remained there, refused to go to Washington town, though he was warmly solicited to go there and assured of safety, and though it was in that county that the offence was committed, to prepare for the prosecution of which was the principal object of his mission, and where only evidence was to be procured. Staying but a few days at Pittsburgh, he returned to Philadelphia with the rapidity of a post rider, accompanied by a military guard through the most peaceable part of the country, where there were many respectable citizens with whom he was well acquainted, and others who would have been glad to have seen him, and would have thought it a pleasure to do him any reasonable service.

Not contented with discovering this total want of confidence in the most discreet people of that country, when he returned to Philadelphia he made an unprovoked attack in the newspapers on the magistrates, clergy, and all the other inhabitants of the whole western counties; I say unprovoked; for though a ludicrous account of his journey had been published in the Pittsburgh gazette and republished in Philadelphia, yet if it was a crime it could not be ascribed to the people whose character he traduced, for few of them knew he had been up till they heard of his being gone again.

Though I reside within two miles of the great road, by which he returned, the first information I had of his having been up was from that very publication in the gazette. If I had known he had been there I would undoubtedly have waited on him, and invited him to my house ; there were others who would have done so as well as me.

There had been no insult offered or injury done to any excise officer, nor actual opposition given to the execution of the law in all the country through which he passed and repassed, and at that time the distillers there generally would have been easily induced to have complied with the law ; but the supervisor's conduct went far to suppress the growing disposition towards compliance, which even the secretary himself acknowledges to have existed at that time. He indeed procured evidence against two men for being concerned in the riot at Faulkner's, but the evidence was false. The two men were not only innocent but meritorious, and the proofs of their innocence were so decisive as not to leave the least doubt remaining ; therefore though a bill had been found at the district court, in consequence of the perjury, the prosecution was discontinued.

The witness was a recruit, and at that time an hofler of Capt. Faulkner's. I know nothing of his character ; but I have sufficient reason to presume that Capt. Faulkner's own testimony would condemn no person before a court of justice where his character was known. I never knew who it was that suborned the witness to swear against Messrs. Kerr and Beer, but I am persuaded the supervisor's moral principles were too good to permit him to be knowingly concerned in it. All

the information the secretary is pleased to communicate on this, is, that there was a mistake in the persons; fortunately the mistake operated against persons whose character and situation protected them from falling victims to the most gross and flagrant depravity. It might have been otherwise with persons equally innocent.

We are further informed that testimony was procured by him of the persons who composed the Pittsburgh Committee, and in a letter of the secretary to the governor, he says that Mr. Gallatin was one of them; this is also a mistake, for Gallatin and myself were both attending the General Assembly of the state in Philadelphia at the time of the Pittsburgh Committee.

These proceedings encouraged those who were disposed to oppose the execution of the excise law, to exult in the weakness of the administration of the revenue, and confirmed their belief, that a law which could not be executed would be repealed. When the head officer of the District was ashamed to appear in defence of it, people who knew there was no danger did not ascribe his behaviour to fear, even those who were convinced of the necessity of submission and would otherwise have contributed to promote it, thought it prudent to be silent.

From this time the number and boldness of those, who violently opposed the law, and maltreated the officers who executed it and the citizens who complied with it, visibly increased. It was not till after this that persons were put in jeopardy for entering their bills; and the secretary acknowledges that the laws

appeared during 1793 to be gaining ground, that several principal distillers who formerly held out had complied, and that others discovered a disposition to comply, which was only restrained by the fear of violence. I will add that as far as I was acquainted with the distillers, the compliance would have been general, if adequate protection had been afforded by government.

It was not however an expensive protection that was desired or necessary. The presence and authority of a court of justice would have answered every necessary purpose, and less would not do. The necessity of a federal court going into that country, or of competent powers being vested in the state courts, had been suggested to the President, and urged on the secretary of the treasury, who at that time was not only the responsible head of the revenue department, but who also at that time originated the revenue laws, as well as directed the arrangements for the execution of them.

On a full conviction of the propriety of this measure, Congress in March 1793 enacted a law to enable the federal judiciary to hold special sessions nearer the place where crimes were committed, than those to which the sessions of the circuit court had been fixed by law. Those who anxiously wished to see the dignity and authority of the laws supported, expected that a special session would have been held in the western counties with all convenient speed. If this had been done, I am certain there would have been no Insurrection.

But far from applying this cheap, rational and efficacious remedy, the disorders were permitted to go on and encrease till July 1794. Previous to this how-



ever, on the fifth of June, authority was vested in the state courts to try causes arising under the revenue laws. Though this important improvement in the laws was too long delayed, yet if it had been fairly exercised, even at this late period, extraordinary exertions would have been unnecessary; but these ordinary and salutary methods of preventing the evil appear never to have been seriously designed.

Previous to the necessary powers being vested in the state courts, processes had privately issued out of the district court at Philadelphia, but the execution of them was delayed till July following, when the marshal was sent to the western counties to serve the processes in the midst of the hurry of harvest, when men's minds are agitated with unusual care and their bodies with vigorous exertions, and when to the heat of the season and the competition of labour is generally added the stimulus of ardent spirits. At this unfortunate period the marshal arrived and served the processes, which required the distillers to appear at the district court in Philadelphia. I do not mean that people drink more ardent spirits in harvest in this country, than in other places, where there is no other substitute. It is drunk on these occasions in as great quantities on the east side of the mountains as it is on the west.

He served all the processes that were directed to the distillers of Fayette County, thirty four in number, without interruption, and had been equally successful in serving all those in Washington County, till the very last writ, when he unfortunately went into Pittsburgh.

Before I proceed further it is proper to remark, that during the first two years the number who committed infractions on the laws were comparatively small and confined to but a few places, that in the last year as the disposition among the distillers to comply with the law became more evident, the opposition to it became more violent, and was carried on in other and more alarming methods, that during this period the treasury department either wholly neglected it or tampered with it, in such a manner as was only calculated to encourage the opposition and discourage every exertion of well disposed citizens to support the law. It is an undoubted fact that the manner in which the execution of the law was conducted, while it invited opposition gave alarming apprehensions to men of discernment; for, they could not otherwise account for it than by supposing, that the disorders were designedly fostered until they would produce a more serious issue. Many of them knew that he who stood at the helm of the revenue department had no aversion to being employed as a pilot in a storm. When the whole method of conducting the coercion of the laws, both as to time and manner, is compared with the crisis produced by it, and the subsequent proceedings relative to that crisis, are taken into consideration and judiciously examined, the candid reader will be the better qualified to judge of the reasonableness of these apprehensions.

It is true the secretary assigns some reasons in his report for this negligence, but they are not found, they are indeed scarcely plausible. Did the laws give him any more power to dispense with the application of their coercive powers, than it did to the people in

their non-compliance. The constitution has indeed vested the humane and salutary power of pardoning in the President, but has not vested the power of granting impunity in the commission of crimes, nor of dispensing with the execution of the laws in the secretary. That impunity, which evidently contributes to promote opposition to the laws, and increase the number and the crimes of offenders, is undeserving of the name of lenity. It is a refinement in cruelty.

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C H A P. VII.

WHEN the inspector came to Pittsburgh, he expressed his surprise and satisfaction that he had succeeded in serving the processes without meeting with either injury or insult: what a pity it was that he delayed to serve the last one? Some who were present when he expressed surprise at his success, were equally surprised that he should have expected any opposition. However, a too successful method was soon found to promote opposition and excite outrage, I do not say with design.

The next day, in company with the inspector, he went to serve the last writ on a distiller named Miller, near Peter's creek. On leaving the place, a number of men were observed as if in pursuit of them and one gun was discharged; not, however, it is believed, with a design to do execution. It is well known that, if the design had been to shoot one, or either of them, they could not have escaped from so many men, few

of whom I suppose would have missed their aim at a pigeon or the head of a squirrel. Appearing, however, to be in bad humour, the marshal and inspector rode off.

It is usual in that, and perhaps in every other, country, where day labourers are scarce, for the neighbours mutually to assist each other as their grain becomes ripe, and this being the throng time of harvest will easily account for so many people being together as has been represented; the number has been differently stated, some accounts making it only ten, while others have extended it as high as thirty.

The marshal behaved well, and would have been finally successful, if he had finished serving the writ before he called on the inspector. I have never heard a reason assigned for his stopping short, and going to Pittsburgh, before he completed the business; or, for his bringing the inspector with him. The inspector knew there were designs against himself, and he had procured arms, and otherwise prepared his house for an expected attack. He ought not to have involved the marshal in the same risk with himself, and the marshal ought to have considered that, however unreasonable the distinction is, the people in Europe as well as here, have always made a great difference between an officer of excise and the officer of a court of justice. The last seems, as if he shared in the solemn respectability of the judiciary, and the first, as if he partook of the odium of the tax, the collecting of which he superintends.

The people of Washington and Allegany counties, have been charged with a capricious inconsistency of

character. They have complained of persons of bad character being appointed for collectors of the excise tax, and were offended at general Nevil accepting of the office of inspector, whose popularity of character was acknowledged by themselves. This paradox, however, may be explained.

During the continuance of the state excise general Nevil was one of the greatest declaimers against it, and of the most open encouragers of opposition to it. When Graham, the state excise-man was shaved, had his hair cut, and expelled from the county, if he did not patronize that outrage he openly approved of it, and said they did not use the rascal half as bad as he deserved. In the assembly of the state, which preceded that which sat when the excise law was enacted by Congress, he voted against the repeal of the state direct tax in order to make way for repealing the state excise. In the subsequent assembly he voted for the resolutions against the passage of the excise law then before Congress. He and I sat and voted together for them, and we had always agreed in our principles respecting excises, though I never agreed with him in opinion that the excise officers ought to be ill-treated.

It was but a few days after he voted for the resolutions censuring the law, that he himself accepted of the office of inspector of that very survey, in which he had distinguished himself for his opposition to the collecting of the state excise. The people were the more irritated against him, on being informed that when he was told that he would forfeit the good opinion of his neighbours, from whose good will he had held any office which he chose, and which they had in their

power to bestow, answered he did not regard their good will, he had got an independent salary of 600 a year; I suppose he meant Dollars, but it passed among the people for pounds. I for some time thought the whole story fabricated in order to excite more effectually the popular odium against him, but I was afterwards informed of it by authority, too substantial to leave room for doubt, and too well disposed to admit a suspicion of design.

The authority of the law, and the dictates of cool philosophy will not admit of the people connecting their submission to the law with their respect for the man. But we must in our dealings with men, take human nature as it is, and admit that prejudice and passion will have their sway in directing the conduct of the great mass of mankind. All are not lawyers, all are not philosophers, nor do lawyers and philosophers always regulate their conduct by their own precepts.

They looked on the inspector as giving up his principles for a bribe, and bartering the confidence they had in him for money, and were the more irritated at his speaking so contemptuously of their good opinion, which he had been formerly so solicitous to obtain. There is also a great aversion among the mass of the people to salary officers. This has even discovered itself against the county judges, though their salaries are but moderate.

The inspector was certainly early sensible of his loss of popularity. I observed it when he came to Philadelphia, the first winter after he had accepted of the office. When I called to see him at his lodgings, he told me with joy that he had lodged in Greenburgh

all night and been well treated. I expressed my surprise that he should have any other expectations. He answered that he had hesitated greatly about venturing into it, but not finding any convenient road to pass it he had finally determined to go in. I have not found that any threats had been made against him there, or any other place at that time. Certainly if we are in the way of our duty we ought to discover confidence. Causeless fears invite insult.

The secretary asserts that Washington County has uniformly distinguished its resistance by a more excessive spirit, than has appeared in the other counties, and seems to have been chiefly instrumental in kindling and keeping alive the flame. This character is admitted to be well founded. That part of it which lays adjacent to the Monongahela and contiguous to general Nevil's residence has been called the center of opposition, and was undoubtedly the cradle of the insurrection. As their character is equally good with those of other parts of the western counties, the only reason I have heard assigned for their distinguishing themselves in this manner was their resentment of general Nevil's conduct. It was with these very people he had formerly enjoyed that popularity, which brought him into the supreme executive council, the Convention, and frequently into the Assembly of the state for Washington County, before that part of it where he resides was included in Allegany county, and it was to that part of Allegany, which was taken from Washington, to which the violences committed in it were confined.



The committee of conferees who met with the President's commissioners at Pittsburgh, of whom we shall hear further presently, stated this prejudice against the officer, as a cause of the opposition, and the declaration that Miller made of his own feelings is a proof that resentment prevailed over every other consideration. It is asserted that he said that he felt himself mad with passion, that he thought having to pay 250 Dollars and attend the court of Philadelphia would ruin him: That he felt his blood boil at seeing general Nevil along to pilot the officer to his very door: That he had been as much against the excise law as any body, when old Graham, the excise man was seized, had his hair cut, &c. he had heard general Nevil say they ought to have cut the ears of the old rascal, and when the distillers were fined he talked as much against it as any body, and those feelings were not peculiar to him alone, they were general in that part of the country.

I would willingly have avoided this digression if I could have done justice to the cause without it, but as I undertake to develop the causes which promoted, and the circumstances which characterised, the first popular tumults which alarmed and threatened to convulse the most extensive federal republic on which the sun has ever shone, and which occasioned the equipment and marching of the first formidable militia army raised under the federal government, and the first instance of brother being called to fight with brother, or of an army of 15,000 men being marched from two to four hundred miles, in order to assist the marshal of the district to seize and transport a few persons

to a prison, in order to stand a trial above three hundred miles from their place of residence ; every step taken in this important crisis will be of importance to posterity, and improved by them either as precedents to be imitated or mistakes to be avoided. / The first causes which have led to, or impelled, the most alarming events in society, have too generally been overlooked in history. These, however, are of the greatest importance to be known, because by an early attention to them great mischiefs might be prevented at a small expence.

## C H A P. VIII.

THE marshal returned from Miller's to Pittsburgh, and the inspector went to his own house some miles distant from Miller's. On the same day the Mingo creek regiment rendezvoused in order to form a select corps of militia, as their quota of the 80,000 men required by Congress. In the evening before they parted, they received information of the inspector having been with the marshal at Miller's serving writs, and of his having been chased away from there. Early next morning John Holcroft, the reputed author of Tom Tinker's letters, and about thirty-six others, most of whom had been at the militia rendezvous, with arms in their hands, appeared at the house of the inspector; on being asked by him what their business was, and answering in a suspicious manner, they were, without further provocation, fired on from the house, and after returning the fire, they were fired on by the negroes from the adjoining buildings. Being thus unexpectedly attacked in flank they retired, having six

wounded, one of them mortally; the inspector's family received no injury; he had been apprised, some time before the arrival of the marshal, of an attack being meditated against him by some members of the Mingo creek association, and prepared to repel it by setting thick plank against the windows, and by procuring a sufficient number of arms to put the negroes in a state of defence. This was not known to the assailants.

Some of the circumstances relating to this transaction, have been differently stated, by the late secretary and others. The number of the rioters has been called about one hundred, and they are charged with having commenced the attack. They did not, however, exceed thirty-six and it has been proved on oath before the circuit court, that the inspector began the attack before any outrage had been attempted by Holcroft's party. No doubt he had reason to suspect that their design was to compel him to surrender his papers and resign his commission. He had been warned of such a design, and it was probably only accelerated by his assisting at serving the writs, and perhaps conducted by other hands. Unfortunately, however, it did not end here. That resentment which formerly discovered itself by casual excesses in which comparatively few were engaged, and those few generally persons of violent passions and little discretion, now assumed the tone of unreflecting madness, and drew into its vortex many persons of good morals, and who usually discovered a respectable measure of discretion in all their dealings as men and citizens.

By the mortification of the defeat, and by the flame of resentment kindled by one of Holcroft's party being killed, and so many wounded, all regard for consequences was swallowed up by the passions of the moment, and uncommon exertions were made that night to prepare for accomplishing their object next day. The vicinity of the Mingo creek association which included a large proportion of that regiment, contributed greatly to their success; by means of that association they were prepared like a disciplined phalanx to act with vigour agreeably to whatever direction they took, and were as a centre for others to rally round. It is generally agreed that next morning not less than 500 men mostly armed, rendezvoused at Couche's fort, a few miles from the inspector's house. Many attended solely because they had not firmness sufficient to refuse.

While they were deliberating what was best to be done, the reverend Mr. Clark, a venerable and very old clergyman, expostulated with them on the impropriety of their enterprise, and used his utmost endeavours to dissuade them from it; but they considered his sentiments to proceed from the cold caution and timidity naturally attendant on extreme age; and looking on him, perhaps, to be in his dotage, and unfit to advise in affairs not suited to his time of life, they unfortunately despised his counsel, and suffered themselves to be carried on by the hurricane of their irritated and blind passions.

From Couche's fort they marched to the inspector's house. They elected a committee of three to superintend the enterprise; the committee appointed ma-

Major M<sup>r</sup> Farlane to command the party, subject however to its direction. The orders were to demand and obtain the inspector's commission and papers, and to offer no violence to his person, family or property, farther than would be absolutely necessary for accomplishing this object. The horses were left under a guard in the woods, and the committee took their seat on an eminence at some distance from the inspector's house.

Major Kirkpatrick, with a detachment of eleven men from the garrison at Pittsburgh, had arrived that morning to assist the Inspector, who when informed of the force that was coming against him thought it prudent to withdraw to a place of concealment, and not having a prospect of defending the house left it in charge of his kinsman Kirkpatrick, with directions to make a capitulation in favour of the property if practicable, if not to defend it as long as possible.

When Major M<sup>r</sup> Farlane with the assailants approached the house, a flag was sent from the Committee to demand of the inspector to deliver up his papers. On answer being returned that the inspector had left the house, a second flag was sent, and demand made that six persons should be admitted into the house to search for his papers, and take them. This demand however was absolutely refused. Notice was then given by a third flag, for the mistress of the family and such other females as were in the house to withdraw, which being done the firing commenced. About fifteen minutes after a call was heard from the house, and those within ceased firing; upon which major M<sup>r</sup> Farlane stepping from behind a tree, and commanding

his party to desist from firing, received a deadly shot from the house and instantly expired. The assailants believing that the cessation of firing in the house and the call from it, was a feint to put them off their guard, and that M<sup>r</sup> Farlane was killed by a shot aimed at him in time of parley, concluded that he was murdered, and becoming exceedingly enraged, renewed the firing with great vigour. While a message was sent to the Committee to enquire whether the house should be stormed, a man without any orders set fire to some straw in the barn, which communicated the flame to the whole building, and soon extended itself to the adjacent buildings. The intense heat and danger of the flame immediately communicating to the dwelling house, obliged Major Kirkpatrick and his party to surrender; and they were received and dismissed without injury.

When it is considered that the assailants believed that their leader was shot with design by Major Kirkpatrick himself, and that they dismissed him and his party without injury, it must be admitted that notwithstanding they were enraged to a degree of madness, they discovered no inclination for wantonly shedding blood. Kirkpatrick and M<sup>r</sup> Farlane had been both officers through the whole course of the late war with Great Britain. What a pity, that those who had fought together in so good a cause should have had the misfortune, the one to shed the other's blood in a cause so ill judged and so indiscreetly conducted. I never saw M<sup>r</sup> Farlane so as to know him, but I had long heard him spoken of as a well-behaved respectable citizen, who had made an independent fortune by honest

industry, and I cannot find that he was ever concerned in any other outrage before this day which to him was fatal.

Many incidents relative to this unhappy affair have been very differently represented. However they are not very important : but it will readily be observed that in one particular of some importance, I have contradicted the report of the late secretary. When the assailants demanded the Inspector's papers, he asserts that they were answered, that they might send persons to search the house, and to take away whatever papers they could find appertaining to his office. But not satisfied with this they insisted unconditionally, that the armed men, who were in the house for its defence, should march out and ground their arms, which Major Kirkpatrick peremptorily refused, considering it, and representing it to them, as a proof of a design to destroy the property. This refusal put an end to the party. However what I have stated is the truth, confirmed by solemn testimony taken before the circuit court, and the truth or falsehood of this fact was what in a great measure distinguished the character and marked the aggravation of the crime. As stated by the secretary, it was their object to treat the detachment of the Federal troops as enemies in a state of war, and to treat the house as a garrison which they had a right to plunder or not, as they saw cause. If this was true, it was a rebellion in form, and constituted unequivocally the crime of treason. If his statement was not true, it was only a riot of the same nature of those attacks formerly made on Wells and others, only differing in force. Though his account of it is certainly fallacious, yet it was on the supposed validity of it



that the associate judge gave the certificate preparatory to calling out an army, and occasioned the offence to be tried on a charge of treason.

The house of the inspector was burned, and besides his furniture, which was valuable, a number of certificates and other papers of importance to a large amount, were also consumed. The certificates, however, being loaned and registered, were not lost. It was a pity, that as he was warned of the danger and had early prepared for defence, he did not think of removing his own private papers. Major Kirkpatrick had been a brave and experienced officer, but surely a desperate defence, without even a chance of success, and with the certain destruction of much valuable property, can be intitled to no other epithet than rashness. True bravery is always connected with prudence. The marshal, and colonel Pressly Nevil, son of the inspector, came up just after the house was burned. There is reason to presume that if colonel Nevile had arrived in time, he would have saved the property, by agreeing to the terms of the assailants, agreeably to the instructions of his father, which major Kirkpatrick disregarded. The marshal must have been convinced that he was in jeopardy before, by being in company with the inspector; his putting himself in evident jeopardy again, when he had no writs to serve nor means of suppressing the riot, may speak in favour of his courage and the goodness of his heart, but not of his prudence; he and colonel Nevil were dismissed without injury, but not without difficulty and risk.

It is to be regretted, that citizens of good moral character and discretion should have engaged in such

a criminal enterprise ; yet some good arose out of this circumstance. If it had not been for such characters being embarked with those of another description, undoubtedly much more blood would have been shed. There were several, who expressed an intention of killing major Kirkpatrick, and who threatened colonel Nevil and the marshal ; but there was on this and all other occasions through the insurrection so many men of discretion as prevented any person from being killed or maimed by the insurgents, except the few that were wounded at the attack on Nevil's house.

Before they parted, probably at the funeral of major M<sup>r</sup>Farlane, they appointed a meeting to be held at Mingo creek. This meeting was composed of a number of those who had been at the inspector's house, some others in the vicinity, who had refused to join in that measure, and a few individuals from Pittsburgh and those parts of Fayette county which lay most contiguous. At this meeting Messrs. Bradford, Marshal, Cook, and Brackenridge, whose names became so conspicuous afterwards, appeared publicly, for the first time, on the stage. It appears that Bradford and Marshal were consulted at the town of Washington, previous to the second attack on Nevil's house, and it is said that at first they declined having any thing to do with it ; but having once consented they were afterwards considered as leaders. At this meeting Bradford, in a violent and lengthy harangue, openly advocated what had been done, urged the propriety and necessity of unanimity in making it a common cause, &c.

Marshal endeavoured to change the state of the question into an enquiry, what was best to be done, in

preference to deciding on the merits of what had been done.

Brackenridge, in a speech of considerable length, drew their attention by amusing them and seeming to countenance their conduct; but before he concluded he ventured to suggest, that though what they had done might be morally right, yet it was legally wrong, and suggested the propriety of their consulting their fellow citizens in the other parts of the survey, and in the mean time of their sending commissioners to the President. He endeavoured to convince them of the bad policy of having those that had not been engaged in the attack on the inspector involved, because in that case they could not act as mediators for those who were obnoxious. The meeting was divided in opinion about the sentiments he expressed; some thought he was warm in the cause, but the more violent were offended: It was pleasing, however, to those who, like himself, were not yet involved. He had been sent for by some of the leaders, but declined coming till he was advised to it by colonel Nevil, who assisted in procuring others to accompany him, to be witnesses of his conduct. He retired before the meeting resolved on any measures.

The only measure agreed on before the meeting broke up was, to call a meeting of the four counties, which they published in the following words. "By  
" a respectable number of citizens, who met on Wednesday the 23d instant, (July,) at the meeting-house  
" on Mingo creek, it is recommended to the townships of the four western counties of Pennsylvania,  
" and the neighbouring counties of Virginia, to meet,

“and choose, not more than five, nor less than two, representatives, to meet at Parkison’s ferry, on the Monongahela, on Thursday the 14th day of August next, to take into consideration the situation of the western country.”

Though this was moved for by the well disposed, and cautiously worded by the chairman and secretary, and designed by them as a means of stopping the disorder, and procuring an amnesty for the guilty, yet that it was designed to be used by Bradford and some others, to draw the whole western counties of Pennsylvania and Virginia into the vortex of insurrection, is evident from their subsequent conduct.

Though no other plan was proposed at the meeting, it was but a few days until Bradford, who now assumed the direction of the business, planned and procured the execution of another enterprise, which, though not so formidable as that already achieved, was equally an outrage on the laws and alarming to government. It was the robbing of the western mail. This plan was executed three days after the meeting, on the post-road, about ten miles from Greensburgh, and twenty two from Pittsburgh, by a namesake and near relation of Bradford’s and a man named Mitchel, both from Washington county. It is not certain that any but himself were concerned in laying the plan, but it was only two days after the mail was robbed that Bradford and others went to Canonsburgh, seven miles from Washington, with the Washington and Pittsburgh mail in their saddle bags. When they opened the mails, that from Washington contained no letters on the measures that had been pursued; but the Pittsburgh mail contained

letters from general Gibson, colonel Nevil, Mr. Bryton, and Mr. Day which gave great offence. They contained a statement of the attack on Nevil's house, and the sentiments expressed by Bradford at the Mingo meeting. These were taken out, and the rest put up carefully, to be returned to Pittsburgh.

Though these letters contained little else than a state of the facts as they really happened, they were made the engine of bringing about the Braddock's field meeting.

At Cannonsburgh the following circular letter was agreed upon, and directed to the militia officers in the same manner as an order would have issued from the proper authority, and was in several regiments as promptly obeyed. By such officers as wished to promote the measure the people were called on as for a usual tour of militia duty, without being informed of the contents of the circular letter which is as follows :

" Sir.

" Having had suspicions that the Pittsburgh post would carry with him the sentiments of some of the people in the country, respecting our present alarming situation ; and the letters by the post being now in our possession, by which certain secrets are discovered, hostile to our interest, it is therefore now come to that crisis, that every citizen must express his sentiments not by his words but his actions. You are then called on, as a citizen of the western country, to render your personal service, with as many volunteers as you can raise, to rendezvous at your usual place of meeting, on Wednesday next ; and from thence you will march to the usual place of rendezvous at Braddock's field, on the Monongahela, on Friday the first day of

August next, to be there at two o'clock in the afternoon, with arms and accoutrements in good order. If any volunteers should want arms and ammunition, bring them forward, and they shall be supplied as well as possible. Here, sir, is an expedition proposed, in which you will have an opportunity of displaying your military talents, and of rendering service to your country; four days provision will be wanted, let the men be thus supplied."

This general order was signed *I. Canon, B. Parkison D. Bradford, A. Fulton, T. Speers, I. Lockry, J. Marshal.*

Colonel Marshal had been an early settler in the western counties, and a useful citizen, during the course of the late war with Britain, and the territorial controversy with Virginia. He was successively, Register, High Sheriff, member of the ratifying convention, of the legislature, county lieutenant, and again register in Washington County; and was respectable for the discretion he discovered in the discharge of the duties of the respective offices he filled. In the ratifying convention, he voted in favour of amendments previous to ratification, but refused to sign the reasons of the minority. Moderation was thought to have been a leading trait in his character. He is an industrious man, and possesses property to a large amount. From these circumstances, the part he took in the insurrection was truly surprising. He had come from the north of Ireland in his youth.

Bradford had been deputy of the attorney general of the state, from the time that Washington had been erected into a separate county. He was originally from Maryland, where he studied law, and had been a member

of the Virginia Assembly, before the settlement of the boundary line of the state, and still practised law in some of the courts of that state. He had favoured the plan of forming a new state. At the time of the adoption of the federal government, he was one of its most zealous advocates in that country.

Parkison, a Pennsylvanian by birth, has always resided in that state. He also was a federalist, and had supported general Nevil's interest formerly, was reputed a good citizen, a man of influence in his neighbourhood, had been a justice of the peace before the revision of the constitution of the state, was president of the Mingo creek association, and one of the committee who superintended the operations in the attack on Nevil's house.

Canon was from Chester county in Pennsylvania, had long been a respectable citizen south of the Monongahela, lived in the town called by his name, had attached himself to the government of Virginia, and favoured the idea of a new state. He was afterwards a member of the legislature, and was an early advocate for the federal constitution, and a supporter of general Nevil's interest in that country.

Fulton was from Maryland; he was not only a federalist, but an open advocate of the excise law, indeed the most openly so, of any I have met with in the western counties, and an avowed friend of the Inspector. He kept a large distillery, and expected by the operation of the excise law to have a considerable advantage over the small distillers. He had also erected a brewery. I have never been able to account for the inconsistency of his conduct.

I know little of Speers or Lochry. The last was lately from Chester county and attended Col. Marshal's mill. He perhaps signed without reflecting what he was doing. The other had lived several years at Canonf-burgh and kept store ; he might have been active at this time , but I presume he was not very influential.

There were but three days from the date of the orders to circulate the information and prepare for the rendezvous. Great exertions were made however in communicating the circular letters, and though many who probably wished to suppress them durst not, there were some who did keep them secret, and some clergymen and others in the south of Washington county were active and successful with their neighbours in dissuading them from going. What had already taken place was aggravated and misrepresented, more were said to have been killed and wounded than really were, men's minds were in a state of consternation and suspense, and the ambiguous manner in which the circular orders were written excited men whose minds were already agitated to expect that some wonderful discovery had been made, and that some great event was about to take place.

In this interval three men from the town of Washington undertook to carry the mail back to Pittsburgh. Under cover of this errand they corresponded with a committee of the town, informed it of the measures that were pursuing, and particularly of the designs of Bradford and his friends against the persons in Pittsburgh, who had written to Philadelphia a statement of the present situation of the country, and of the danger the town might be exposed to on their ac-



count. They also assured the committee that a number of well disposed men would mix with the others to attend the rendezvous at Braddock's field, in order to have the better opportunity of preventing excesses. Three of the persons, who had written the letters, and who had it in their power to retire for some time without much inconveniency, and who of their own accord were disposed to do so, agreed to submit to the form of an expulsion by the committee.

On the day of rendezvous it was supposed, that a mixed multitude, not much short of seven thousand, appeared on the ground. But from examining the population of the country from which they were collected, it is not probable that their number was near so great. Many of those who did attend were without arms. Several field officers in the vicinity of Braddock's field attended, with as many of their friends as they could collect, to be prepared to prevent excesses, and save Pittsburgh if it should be in danger, and some of the field officers of the most formidable and warlike corps who attended are known to have been well disposed to peace and order.

The greatest number was from Washington county, but though those from the Regiment about the town of Washington came in force, with the general of the county and their colonel at their head, yet it is notorious that general Taylor and colonel Stokely were uniformly opposed to the whole system of outrage and resistance. Colonel Hamilton of the Mingo creek Battalion was also opposed to it, and when he heard of the orders of march coming to his Regiment, though he had not seen them himself, he rode with all

possible speed to the county town to countermand them, but too late to have effect. Every thing was conducted with a rapidity characteristic of the indiscretion that governed the conductors of the measures. General Wilkin with a great many others of his Allegany county Brigade were well disposed. This was particularly the case with colonel Patterson, and colonel M<sup>r</sup> Nair and their friends, and also with the principal part of the citizens from Pittsburgh. There was but one Major and a company of about 60 men from Westmoreland county, who appeared in a state of preparation according to the orders. The Major is said to have discovered a warlike disposition. Many however from the two adjacent townships in Westmoreland county went to be spectators of what was carrying on and increased the crowd. Some of these might have gone with a bad disposition, and some might have caught the infection when they were there. I have not however heard of any remark made on the conduct of any of them, except the Major to whom I have alluded. I am certain the colonel and majors of the nearest Westmoreland Battalion were well disposed. There were not more than twelve men from Fayette county at Braddock's field. The orders had been sent to colonel Cock, who concealed them from his most intimate neighbours, and went alone to endeavour by his advice to prevent excesses. The few others from that county had been informed of the meeting by rumor.

Colonel Cock residing in the nearest part of Fayette to Mingo creek had attended that meeting with the same view. He was chairman there and at a number of the subsequent meetings. He had been Member of the

first convention of Pennsylvania, and was judge of the court of Westmoreland, and lieutenant of that county till Fayette county was erected, of which he is now an associate judge. Being an elderly, and esteemed a discreet man he is generally made chairman in all meetings of which he is a member. He has rarely been known to pass the bounds of discretion if we except in the ardour of his zeal for the adoption of the Federal government, he was proportionably mortified at the excise law and some measures that led to it being enacted by that government, but had no hand in the opposition made to the excise, and put himself into suspected situations in order to restore order. He being generally known through Pennsylvania was much spoken against, He went to Philadelphia and entered into recognizance, but there was no cause of action found against him. His having been chairman in all meetings and committees connected with the insurrection, is the reason of this digression.

Bradford reviewed the troops on the ground, and is said to have assumed the powers and to have received the honours of Major-general. There is no doubt but that he received every honour that could be conferred. The infatuated disorganizers idolized him, and those who held him in contempt, and looked on the measures with horror, were many of them the most obsequious in their attentions to him. They believed that at that moment expulsion or even more severe punishment depended on his will. His denunciation of cowards and traitors, and holding up Roberespierre's system of terror for imitation at the Mingo creek meeting, was well known to them, and spread a temporary panic.

A committee was appointed at the rendezvous, who resolved that general Gibson and colonel Nevil should be expelled, and authorised the Pittsburgh committee to put this resolution into execution. It was resolved that the army, as it was called, should march to Pittsburgh. On this occasion the people of Pittsburgh went forward to prepare for giving them the most hospitable reception in their power, that they might pass through it with good humour. Bradford also sent to the commandant of the garrison to inform him that no harm was intended, and to request being permitted to pass peaceably. They marched in, however, by the Monongahela road which did not lead to the garrison, and being furnished with refreshments in Pittsburgh by the towns-people, they crossed the Monongahela without giving any disturbance.

After crossing the river many returned to their homes, and these were no doubt the most orderly. A great number of the well disposed people had previously gone to their homes from Braddock's field. A number, however, stayed over night near Pittsburgh, and in the night burned a small barn, the property of major Kirkpatrick, with the grain it contained, which was then the property of a tenant. They attempted also to burn the dwelling house, but were prevented by the interposition of colonel Hamilton, &c. who with difficulty saved it. About the same time, a party who had parted from the main body and remained in Pittsburgh, attempted to burn Kirkpatrick's dwelling house in the town, but were prevented by the interposition of colonel Cook, and a brother of major M'Farlane, who

had been killed, assisted by the address of Mr. Brackenridge.

It will naturally be enquired what was the object of this mighty rendezvous of men. Nothing appears to have been done or attempted by those who directed it, but ordering two more of the citizens of Pittsburgh to be expelled. This might have been as well accomplished by sending a deputation to Pittsburgh to desire that it should be done. However hard it might have appeared to require it, the men would have been wise enough to have gone out of the way themselves till times had altered. To understand this we must go back to the private meeting at Canonsburgh. It had been there agreed upon to attack the garrison at Pittsburgh, and seize the arms and ammunition for their own defence. They considered the conduct of Congress in seizing the British posts, arms, &c. while they remained colonies, petitioning the throne, acknowledging their dependance on it, and endeavouring to have their just grounds of complaint removed, to be a precedent perfectly applicable to their case. It was in consequence of this determination that the rendezvous was ordered, but the object was kept secret; there were some present who dissented.

Thus an enterprise of a most daring nature was determined on during an hour or two spent in a tavern, by men unauthorized even by those who had already rendered themselves obnoxious; for those men were not delegated, and not more than two of them had been personally engaged in the attack on the inspector's house. Not only to determine on such a daring and dangerous enterprise, but to endeavour to draw the whole

people of the western counties into the execution of it, blindfolded, was such an inconsiderate measure as I am at a loss for words to express my sentiments of; but I have no doubt that long before this time their own reflections have painted the impropriety of their conduct on their own minds, in colours more glowing than can be represented by language.

It was not thus that the revolutionary contest was commenced. There was not only the slow deliberation of the wisest men selected from every colony, but of the most discreet men in every county and township, and the magnitude of the object was set before the people in the most remote situations, before they were drawn into the arduous contest. May the conduct of the Canonsburgh committee be an example to deter from such rash and impetuous proceedings!

When colonel Hamilton, and some others, had discovered the design of attacking the garrison, and persuaded Bradford and Marshal to countermand the orders, he told them that the arms were for an expedition against the Indians under general Scott. Bradford, without even consulting Marshal or answering a word to Hamilton, wrote the countermand, and handing it to Hamilton asked him if that would do. He inserted in a postscript what he had been told of Scott's expedition as a reason of the countermand; this first brought the design of the rendezvous to light; but it seems it was now given up; but the rendezvous being carried on, some who attended still believed that to have been the object of it, till they were convinced of its being laid aside by the event. Marshal wished to

have countermanded the orders soon after they were issued.

Bradford promised Hamilton and others to advise the militia, who met at Washington, not to march to Braddock's field. They were convened in the court-house, and Mess. Ross and Stokely addressed them with the most powerful reasons, to dissuade them from proceeding further. Bradford notwithstanding his agreement to the contrary, addressed them with vehement declamation in favour of proceeding. They had listened attentively to the first speakers, but appeared to be so influenced by Bradford's speech, that when Marshall rose after him to offer some reasons against proceeding, he could not be heard, and that night his house was tarred and feathered. This expression of resentment seems to have been the reason of his proceeding farther in that course, from which he seemed desirous of retreating; from this and some other instances it appears he was not so much a leader, as he was led by Bradford, and pushed forward by his dread of those, whose measures he had at first inconsiderately countenanced.

This was the only open attempt that was made to address the people who were collected by the circular letter, and if it had not been for Bradford the attempt would have been successful. It was with great difficulty they were got to parade for the march after leaving the court house; few but young men and boys appeared willing; but it was not thought proper they should go alone, and if any marched it had been agreed among the moderate people that they would go in company. Colonel Stokely, though he had openly opposed the

measure; put himself at the head of his regiment, Mr. Ross the senator, general Taylor and others who were equally opposed to the measures went also.

I have been the more particular in relating the rendezvous at Braddock's field, as it had the most formidable aspect, and approached nearest to the description of a combination against the government, of any instance that happened during the disorders; yet when examined, it does not prove to be a combination of the people of any county, but of six men in a tavern, who wished, probably, to inflame the people into a combination, which, however, did not take place, for there appears to have been no plan laid, nor combination entered into, at the rendezvous. Ordering the expulsion of the two men and directing the march to Pittsburgh, was conducted by a committee composed in part of very orderly well disposed men, who thought it imprudent to object to any measure dictated by Bradford, whose terror was aided by the occasional interference of some desperate men who were not of the committee. The march to Pittsburgh, and the expulsion, though very disagreeable to the committee members from Pittsburgh, was agreed to even by them. No man ever commanded an army, so great a proportion of which were traitors to the cause, nor had such a deference paid to him with so little sincerity, as Bradford, on this occasion.

Though this formidable parade made an astonishing noise and appearance, it vanished in smoke like a rocket, and left no trace of its transactions behind, except the march to Pittsburgh, for the purpose of parade; yet its effects were undoubtedly more pernicious



ous than those which were produced by any preceding excess. Till now the flame had been confined to a small space ; but from this it spread to a distance. The countenance given to the rendezvous and the acquiescence in Bradford's measures, apparent in the conduct of judges, attorneys, the senator of Congress, and other respectable citizens, including the whole of the magistrates, other officers, and merchants, of Pittsburgh, the motives for which were not understood, gave the appearance of unanimity in the cause, and inconsiderate people in other places became ashamed that they had done nothing. It had been reported from the Mingo meeting, that Bradford and Brackenridge had pledged their lives and fortunes for the lawfulness and success of the measures ; their legal abilities were extolled by infatuated people at the time, and it was believed that under their direction the plans must be well laid, and judiciously conducted, and the countenance given at Braddock's field by so many men of sound judgment and respectable character was esteemed an infallible test of the goodness of the cause. However necessary this temporizing conduct was on the occasion, it had a very bad effect on the country at large. It was believed, however, by those who practised it, that this was the most certain method of saving Pittsburgh, and preventing the effusion of human blood. Bradford's movements were too rapid to allow time for defensive arrangements, or to find out in whom they could have confidence. The time had been when Marshal would have been one of the first applied to on such occasions ; the manner in which he and some others now acted, made every person be suspected till his sentiments could be un-

quivocally known, and the impressions of terror made prudent persons cautious in divulging their sentiments.

It was but a few days after this that a party went to the residence of Wells in Fayette county, burned his house, and compelled him to resign his commission, and swear not to hold the office in future. He was collector for Westmoreland and Fayette counties. This party appears to have gone from the parts of Westmoreland adjoining, and to have been joined by a few from Fayette. There appears to have been a smaller proportion of men of common discretion engaged in this than in the attack on Nevil's house. The house of Wells was burnt without resistance or opposition, and against the remonstrance of the most prudent; several were forced by this party to go along with them contrary to their inclination.

Threatening letters were sent into the center and southern parts of Westmoreland to excite them to go against Webster, collector of Bedford, and many poor people in those parts had cause of complaint against him, which did not exist against other excise officers. He had made a practice of seizing liquors on the road from poor people, who were carrying it to procure their salt, or other necessaries; some instances of this might be mentioned that were very inhumane; sometimes he was contented with receiving the excise tax and letting the liquors pass, but generally he kept all, and sometimes detained the horses for a time, restoring them again as a matter of favour. This hardship fell generally on the poor, for he let others pass, even though they called and drank at his tavern, with their loads. It was believed he did not account with the public for the proceeds.

That his conduct was not agreeable to law was asserted by the inspector, when he was applied to, but no redress was given, nor was the practice relinquished. The law authorising seizure was not made till June immediately preceding the insurrection.

The party who went against Webster were comparatively small, some of them were from Bedford county, but much the greatest number were from the parts of Westmoreland adjoining, many of whom had had their liquors unlawfully seized by him. They thought it robbery, nor do I know if they thought amiss. The law subjected distilleries to the officers, but did not at that time subject people travelling on the road who had nothing to do with the entry of stills, more than a man taking his grist to the mill, had to do with the tax having been paid on the mill by its owner.

Webster made no resistance, but brought out his papers, and tore and trod on them. The party differed among themselves. Some were for tarring, feathering, &c. Fire was set to his hay stacks and stables, but the more moderate party were the majority. They extinguished the fire and protected the man from any other injury than insulting language. Not agreeing how he should be treated they took him along with them some miles, and apprehensions being entertained by himself and some others, of the outrageous party falling back and treating him ill when the others were gone, he was taken into Westmoreland and there being lodged in safety that night, he was permitted to return home the next day without further injury. He had expected the visit, probably before it was thought

of by those who made it, and had taken refuge in the town of Bedford; but finding himself unsafe there he returned to his own house and prepared for the event.

Immediately after the meeting at Mingo creek, Bradford wrote to the principal persons in the neighbouring counties of Virginia, pressing them in the most urgent manner to send Delegates to the meeting, which was appointed to be held at Parkison's Ferry. His sending this letter, and the style in which it was wrote, indubitably proves the improvement he designed to make of the Parkison meeting. His robbing the mail, and directing the rendezvous at Braddock's field, were calculated to inflame the minds of the people previously to that meeting, and encrease the number of those who would be rendered desperate by their crimes. In this he was but too successful. The threatening letters to excite the people to attack Wells and Webster, though they have not been traced to Bradford, were no doubt a part of the plan, and by their means and the Braddock's field rendezvous, the infatuation was vastly extended and the number of offences was encreased, between the meeting at Mingo creek and that at Parkison's Ferry. Even in Virginia an Excise officer had fled, and a riot was committed at the place of his residence.

## C H A P. IX.

AFTER the writs had been served on the distillers of Fayette county, they held a meeting to consult what was best to be done, at which other discreet persons besides the distillers attended. They felt exceedingly hurt at being obliged to attend the District court in Philadelphia, after competent powers had been vested in the state courts. Yet although the news of the riots and their fatal effects reached them; and although it was known that parties of armed men were then assembled, in some of the neighbouring counties, in order to intercept the inspector of the revenue and the marshal; an idea of combining with the rioters was not even suggested at the meeting; but on the contrary it was unanimously agreed, that in future the distillers should either abandon their occupation, or enter their stills, and that those who had been summoned should immediately evince their submission, by entering an appearance to the respective suits. In

purfuance of that agreement an exprefs was actually fent to Philadelphia, council was retained, and inftructions for legal and confciencious defence were given ; but it feems that the writs were made returnable at a time when no court was fitting ; and this error in point of law was deemed fufficient to vitiate the procefs ; and to fupersede the neceffity of entering the appearance of the feveral defendants. During this meeting at Uniontown, a letter was received, with the propofition for the meeting of the four Western counties by their delegates at Parkifon's Ferry. But fo predominant was the apprehenfion, that fuch an affemblage would encrease the degree of inflammation, and extend the influence to greater numbers, and fo eager was the hope that the riots might be confined to the place where they originated, and might fubfide or be quelled, without any extraordinary interference, that this propofition was reluctantly read, and never taken into confideration. *See Gallatin's fpeech, pages 9 and 10.*

In the county of Weftmoreland no writs had been ferved nor riots committed, confequently they had no meeting of diftillers nor received any letters ; but on feeing the appointment of the Parkifon's Ferry meeting in the gazette, the influential people determined to pay no attention to it, being apprehenfive that the inflammation might be fpread by it rather than fuppreffed, and that it might be conftrued as giving countenance to the riots which led to that appointment. This advertifement made fimilar impreffions on the people of Pittsburgh alfo at the firft ; but on obferving the rapid progrefs of the inflammation, and the fucceffion of exceffes which had been promoted, efpecially the rendezvous

at Braddock's field ; the choosing of discreet delegates to attend the Parkison meeting, appeared to be the only feasible means of stemming the current of disorder, until the people, who were so highly inflamed, would cool down, and until the cautious and timid would shake off the panic, or lay aside that excessive caution, by which they were governed, and stand forward in defence of the laws, and of that liberty, whose name was prostituted to blazon the most tyrannical measures.

These alarming circumstances made the same impression on all the four counties, without any opportunity of consultation ; consequently the townships they contained were generally represented at that meeting ; but from the short time there was to give warning of this second determination, no means could be adopted to regulate the elections or to impress the cautious part of the citizens with a sense of the necessity of their attending. The general state of these elections cannot be better described than it is done by Mr. Gallatin, in his speech page 13 :

“ The meeting was partly a true representation of the people, but it was partly not so ; for as there is not in this state any regular township meetings ; a few individuals collected in any one township might appoint deputies, and the truth is that in almost every case, a minority of the Inhabitants of the respective townships did make the appointments, in every township likewise where there were any violent characters, such characters would undoubtedly attend the election, while on the other hand moderate men and friends to order were cautious either in attending the elections, or in suffering themselves to be elected :

The meeting at Parkison's Ferry was a pretty full though not a true or equal representation. There were upwards of 200 delegates, three of those were from Ohio county in Virginia and two from Bedford county in Pennsylvania, besides those from the four counties. The place of meeting was unfavourable, being in the neighbourhood in which the resistance had originated, and within a mile of the dwelling house of M'Farlane, who had been killed, and there were probably a greater number of spectators than of delegates.

The delegates convened on an eminence under the shade of trees; colonel Cook was appointed chairman, and Albert Gallatin, secretary. It was soon discovered that there were a number of inflammatory persons among the delegates, few of them however had talents. Bradford opened the meeting, with a statement of the events that had taken place, and concluded with reading the letters that had been taken from the intercepted mail, with some inflammatory comments on them.

At this time the arrival of Commissioners from the President, with powers for restoring order in the Western Country, if a corresponding disposition was met with among the people, was announced to the Meeting. After a short pause colonel Marshal rose and expressed some satisfaction at the information of the arrival of Commissioners; but said that they should not on that account neglect the business of the meeting, and read some resolutions that had been agreed on between Bradford and himself. The first resolution, being against taking the citizens out of the vicinity



for trial occasioned no contest ; the second and most important resolution, runs in the following words :

“ Resolved that a standing committee be appointed, to consist of—members from each county, to be denominated a committee of public safety ; whose duty it shall be to call forth the resources of the western country, to repel any hostile attempts that may be made against the citizens, or the body of the people.”

This, compared with the subsequent resolution, was prefacing the proceedings of the meeting by a direct question, whether the western counties would raise the standard of rebellion or not. This was certainly a bold attempt to form a combination hostile to the government both of this state and the United States. If such a resolution had been offered, before such a number of persons had become desperate by being involved in the preceding riots, it would not have been heard with patience ; but now it required both great address and fortitude to parry it. Fortunately there was among the delegates a man well qualified for this purpose. His fortitude was no doubt the greater, as he knew he was in no danger at home for what he might say here. I mean Mr. Gallatin, the secretary. He rose, and began by criticising on the word hostility ; asked what it meant, or from whence the hostilities were to come. He alleged if it was the exertions of government that were designed to be opposed, the term was improper ; the exertions of government on the citizens in support of the laws being coercion and not hostility. He encouraged them to expect no other means of coercion from government but through the judiciary, and after a number of sensible observations moved to

refer the resolution to a select Committee. But so great was the prevailing panic, that notwithstanding the number of well-disposed members that were in the meeting, he was not seconded; after some delay, however, Marshal himself offered to withdraw the resolution on condition, that a Committee of sixty should be appointed, with power to call a new meeting of the people or their deputies. This was instantly agreed to, and a new resolution was studiously modified, so as to ensure its adoption, and was agreed to by the meeting. In it a determination was expressed to support the state laws, and afford protection to the citizens; this was an important step towards the restoration of order; for at that time no man thought himself safe in many places in telling his real sentiments; Threats were not only circulated in anonymous letters, but were contained in the mottos on liberty poles; one was erected on the morning of the meeting and within view of it; it was erected under the direction of one of those who signed the Braddock's field orders. The motto of it was; *Liberty and no excise, and no asylum for cowards or traitors.* Every man was esteemed a coward or traitor, by those disorganizers, who disapproved of their measures.

Mr. Gallatin had the fortitude to object to the exception against the excise, originally contained in the resolution for support of the municipal laws, and procured it to be struck out; but durst not offer an affirmative resolution in favour of submitting to it. Indeed the doing so at this time would have been imprudent, nor would success, in such a resolution, have been

of use, till submission to the municipal laws had been restored.

In short the resolutions, being five in number, were discussed, and referred to a committee consisting of Bradford, Brackenridge, Gallatin, and Herman Husbands of Bedford, who new modelled them before the next day's meeting, at which they passed without much difficulty. The committee of sixty or of one from each township, was appointed to meet at Red-stone old fort, on the 2d of September, and a committee consisting of twelve members, three from each of the four counties, was appointed to confer with the commissioners from the President. These, with one exception, were well chosen.

The commissioners came to a house near the meeting before it adjourned. This rendered the situation of the friends to order more delicate. It was urged by some that the meeting should not be dissolved till they would know and decide on the terms proposed by the commissioners. With great address, however, they were prevailed on to adjourn without day. Men of discernment knew that nothing would bring the people to a proper sense of their duty, without time for reflection, and for the present agitated state of mind to subside. They knew also that if time could be procured to disseminate knowledge among the people every thing, that was necessary, would be gained. Therefore to restore quietness and gain time was the great object with Gallatin, and those who thought as he did.

Brackenridge probably was actuated by the same motives as Gallatin ; but supported the measures in a different manner. He often kept up the appearances,

and sometimes used the boasting language, which were acceptable to Bradford's party, and opposed Gallatin. Yet he always contributed to bring the proceedings to the same issue.

James Edgar, one of the associate judges of Washington county, gave considerable assistance in prevailing on this meeting to adopt reasonable preliminary measures ; for such measures as would lay a foundation for the complete restoration of order were all that was expected or aimed at this meeting, and this was obtained. There were serious objections against keeping the people long together, and against holding the conference with the Commissioners at this place ; nor was Redstone old fort, appointed for the meeting of the committee of sixty, well chosen, nor were the members, of which it was to be composed, well selected. They were chosen out of the Parkison meeting delegates, by their colleagues, before they left that place. Those who were most fit in some instances excused themselves from attending, and their places were supplied by rash and inflammatory persons who were willing to go. To this circumstance I was attentive at the time, and observed it with sensible regret.

On the 20th of August, the conferees waited on the commissioners at Pittsburgh, according to a previous appointment. Thomas M<sup>c</sup> Kean, Chief Justice, and general William Irwin, commissioners in behalf of the state of Pennsylvania, had also arrived at Pittsburgh. All the conferees, except Bradford, were seriously disposed to submit to the laws and the restoration of order. It was evident at the Parkison Ferry meeting, and on some other occasions, that Marshal wished only for a

safe opportunity of abandoning the cause; and this opportunity was now offered. On the first consultation held by the conferees, they all, except Bradford, agreed that the interest of the country, and their duty as citizens, rendered submission necessary and proper. Some persons, who they expected had influence on Bradford, were employed to converse with him on the subject, and against the next day he seemed perfectly reconciled to submission.

The Commissioners proposed an amnesty for all offences committed before that date, and certain beneficial arrangements, for adjusting delinquencies and prosecutions for penalties now depending, to be made, and communicated by the officers appointed to carry the said acts into execution. These arrangements were understood in conversation to apply to all arrears due for excise, and penalties for not entering their stills. The conferees were also invited to recommend such officers as they would have confidence in for the execution of the excise law.

The conditions, on which these privileges were offered, were, that the general committee, to meet at Redstone old fort, should explicitly declare their determination to submit to the laws of the United States, and that they would not directly nor indirectly oppose the execution of the acts for raising a revenue on distilled spirits or stills, and that they would explicitly recommend a perfect and entire acquiescence under the execution of said acts. That they also would recommend that no violence, injuries or threats, should be offered to the persons or property of officers, or complying citizens.

The conferees, for themselves, promised an entire acquiescence, and to recommend the same to the committee at Redstone; which they agreed to call four days sooner than had been appointed.

The Commissioners on behalf of the State, proposed an amnesty for all indictable offences against the laws of the State, on condition of their keeping the peace and complying with the terms proposed by the United States. These Commissioners, as well as the Commissioners of the United States, laboured much according to the opportunities afforded them, to bring the people to a proper sense of their duty and interest, and to remove their difficulties, and correct their mistakes.

While the Commissioners were at Pittsburgh, a very seditious libel was pasted up on the Market-house, and afterwards published in the gazette. It was wrote in the form of a dialogue, and insulted the Commissioners, the militia of the lower counties, and particularly the militia of New-Jersey, in a very irritating manner, and contained a number of the strongest popular arguments against the execution of the Excise law, and boasts of the intrepidity of those who were opposed to it. It was wrote in a style and manner well suited to encourage and embolden the ignorant and obstinate part of the people, which was the class that now gave most trouble. It might well pass for a production of Tom the Tinker, and indeed it was believed to have flowed from that source; though on enquiry it turned out to be the production of one who had been always a friend to the Excise and the government, though he had not

been active in endeavouring to restore order ; in this respect he was neutral.

Though the conferees had done every thing in their power to obtain the most favourable terms, and though the commissioners of the United States, and of the commonwealth, had granted every thing that was in the power of the federal and state executive to grant, with very few exceptions even in the opinion of Bradford himself, yet many of those who stood most in need of the offered amnesty became inflamed against the conferees, and circulated a report, that they had received bribes ; this incredible story gained ground particularly among the Germans, who, with a number of the most ignorant every where, but particularly adjacent to the Monongahela, thought that the conferees should have agreed to nothing less than an unconditional repeal of the excise law. They did not comprehend the difference between the executive and legislative authority ; nor was there time to instruct them.

The conferees, knowing the importance of time in the present state of the country, were importunate with the commissioners to obtain it, but their own authority being limited to a short day, it was not in their power to grant this request, which was however of the last importance in giving effect to all they had granted.

## C H A P. X.

ON the 28th of August, the committee of sixty met at Redstone old fort (Brownsville). While they were collecting, an armed party arrived from the upper parts of Washington county, who paraded the street with a drum beating. This party consisted of about sixty or seventy infantry, well armed with rifles, and a few light horsemen mounted in uniform. This, and the reports of extreme inflammation among Tom Tinker's men, together with a letter under that signature, which it seems the editor of the gazette thought it even now imprudent to refuse to publish; and in which the conferees are charged with being traitors, encouraging Tom's friends to persevere, and containing severe denunciations against cowards and traitors; and the seditious and insulting dialogue, which I have before mentioned, coming out about the same time, and then supposed to be from the same quarter, and the meeting being in the vicinity of an inflamed neigh-



bourhood, I say all these circumstances conspired to intimidate the delegates to a degree inconsistent with that calmness and reflection necessary for deliberation. This was so evident that some of those, who had the quieting of the country much at heart, hesitated about the propriety of attempting to support the report. Gallatin, however, was disposed to try it, and others agreed with him in making the attempt.

It soon appeared that the declared object of the armed party was, to chastise Samuel Jackson, a wealthy miller in the neighbourhood, for having called the committee *a scrub Congress*. He had used this expression in jest at Pittsburgh, in company with the conferees, where it was considered as inoffensive; but being carried abroad, and artfully misrepresented, occasioned the march of the party in arms, who being highly agitated and heated with drink might have given another example of scandalous outrage, had not the committee interposed; by its influence a visit to Jackson's dwelling by the party, was prevented, and they were prevailed on to accept of an acknowledgement and a treat from him as a complete atonement for his offence. Thus this matter ended, but the party continued at Brownsville till night, and by their presence and threats overawed the meeting.

When the committee proceeded to business, Bradford urged to take the vote immediately, expressing his surprise that any man should hesitate or be unprepared to decide; from his manner, it was evident that, notwithstanding his agreement to the terms of submission at Pittsburgh, and his promises to the commissioners and his colleagues, he was now determined on a sum-

many rejection of the report ; and it was then generally believed that the armed party was brought there for the purpose of supporting him, and averawing the meeting. This indeed was afterwards found to be a mistake, and that this party knew nothing of the meeting at Brownsville, until they were far advanced on their way to it ; they lived in a part of the country where little information circulated, and though they were, perhaps as much inflamed against the excise law, and the officers as any others, yet they were not engaged in the attack on Nevil's house, nor any of the subsequent riots, but were excited to this undertaking by some of Jackson's neighbours, who had a private difference with him. However their presence and behaviour made the same impression on the committee, as if they had come with the express design to overaw them, and answered the same purpose to Bradford.

It required great address in the committee to procure an adjournment of the question till the next day. On this occasion James Edgar, in an address containing ironical compliments on Bradford's strength of mind, which he probably took to be real, and arguments in favour of time for weak men like himself to make up their mind, delivered in a style well adapted to the hearers, and which could not give offence, contributed greatly to procure the adjournment.

Means were used to prevail on the armed party to retire that night, and the next day the gallery of spectators was much thinned, but reports were circulated that Bradford who lodged on the Washington side of the river that night, had bound himself faintly with a number of others to support the opposition by force of

arms, until government would be brought to agree unequivocally to their own terms ; it appeared by what followed that the idea of a complete revolution was now taken up by Bradford, and it was certain that several of the most obstinate of those who originated the present violent measures were among the spectators, and perhaps some of them members of the committee ; but Marshall and others of the most respectable men among them had totally withdrawn from their interest.

The committee was opened next morning by a long, sensible and eloquent speech by Mr. Gallatin ; he alone would venture to open the business in this direct manner. In this speech, no motive to submission was left unexplained, nor any objection left unanswered ; he was supported by Mr. Brakenridge, who having no new ground of argument left unexplained, enforced and enlarged on the arguments already offered and addressed their consciences and their fears. His argument was of the more importance that it was decisive ; formerly he had temporized in such a manner as to induce the rioters to believe he was a friend to their cause.

But like the spirit which at unlucky occasions actuated the Israelitish king, the frenzy which actuated Bradford during the whole of this period, at this unlucky moment impelled him to rise and address the committee in a most extravagant harangue, in the course of which he urged the propriety of erecting an independent government, and alleged that the Federal government had only tempered with Spain and Britain about the Mississippi and the western posts, and trifled with the Indians. Let us be independent,

said he, and we will accomplish these objects in a few months. For a source of supplies he proposed killing the first army that came against us, and supplying ourselves with arms and ammunition as the French had done. This harangue did not contain sufficient good sense to be relished, even by many of his admirers, though it excited their inflammation, and still more intimidated the Committee, who from the supposed combination formed over night were, many of them, afraid that this inflammatory discourse was the signal of actual violence. They were however mistaken. If this was the most absurd and inconsistent exertion Mr. Bradford made, it was his last in that way. He left the meeting when he saw the vote went against him, and afterwards signed the terms of submission, and advised others to sign them ; but reflecting that it would not cover the offence he had committed at this meeting, he left the country before the army came up.

The arguments were concluded by Mr. Edgar ; some part of his speech struck my attention so much, and I recollect it so well, that I will trouble the reader with a short extract of it.

He stated, that he had been a member of the convention which ratified the federal constitution, and had in it objected to the unqualified power of levying excises, but that they had submitted to it, many of them had advocated it in all its parts : Their officers, legislative, executive and judicial had sworn to support it, and they had all voted for members of Congress and applied to the government for protection under it, which was a solemn acknowledgement of their allegiance to it, with all the powers with which it was

vested. That what they might think a premature and inexpedient exercise of the power of levying excises, could never justify them in renouncing allegiance to the government, and would equally justify a resistance to every law, because every general law occasioned complaint from some on whom it pressed hard.

He gave an affecting description of the distressing situation into which they had inconsiderately brought themselves, and stated the sympathy with which they had been treated by their friends, who when they had nothing to fear on their own account had yet put themselves in suspicious situations, and made in some respects a common cause with them; with no other view than the more effectually to dispose government to grant an oblivion for their past offences, on condition of their future submission to the laws, and which could not be granted on any other condition; that now that object being as liberally offered as they had any reason to expect, if it was obstinately refused, they would not only have themselves to blame for the hardships they would bring on themselves, their families and country, but for ingratitude to their friends, who had laboured with so much zeal to extricate them from their difficulties. With such expostulations, and a number of cogent reasons and advices, he concluded a pretty long speech. The respectability of his character for true piety, good morals, and easy manners, as well as the good practical sense expressed in his discourse in a simple and affectionate manner, drew the attention of all descriptions of the audience. His gray hairs which gave him the appearance of being older than he really was had also some effect.

## INSURRECTION.

127

I had never heard speeches that I more ardently desired to see in print than those delivered on this occasion. They would not only be valuable on account of the oratory and information displayed in all the three, and especially in Gallatin's, who opened the way, but they would also have been the best history of the spirit, and the mistakes, which then actuated men's minds. But copies of them could not be procured. They were delivered without any previous preparation other than a complete knowledge of the actual state of things, and of human nature when in similar circumstances. This knowledge, and the importance of the occasion on which it was exhibited, produced such ingenuity of reasoning and energy of expression, as never perhaps, had been exhibited by the same orators before. But after all that could be done by reasoning, it was a matter of great difficulty to get a vote taken. When the vote was taken, the meeting were not unanimous, there were 34 Yeas and 23 Nays; six men it is asserted said afterwards that they had given in the Nay ticket instead of the Yea, by mistake; the certainty of this cannot be known, though if it had not happened they need not have told it, for no one knew how another voted. The vote was on the following resolution. *That in the opinion of this committee, it is the interest of the people of this country to accede to the proposals made by the commissioners of the United States:* The majority through fear refused to put the question on the last proposition, though it was on agreeing to it that the eventual success of the meeting depended. Their fears were certainly greater than their danger, for though several members spoke decisively in favour of

submission, no insult was offered to them. Their panic was not only inspired by the place and circumstances, but many of them were afraid of mischief at home. The Tom Tinker's letter recently published had concluded with severe threats, against those who would comply. Indeed threats of burning houses, tarring and feathering &c. were now made by a description of people, whose voice is not heard in society in settled times. I have said before that several of the committee-men were not well selected, some of them I knew to be of the most inflammatory characters.

## C H A P. XI.

IT was plainly perceived that longer time was necessary ; a new committee of 12 conferees was appointed to procure it, if possible. The conferees who had been with the commissioners before, though they knew that time alone was necessary to bring the people to a sense of their interest and duty, before the terms were finally submitted to them, believed it could not be obtained, and as there had been imputations against them, they declined the appointment, and 12 new conferees were appointed, of whom only 8 waited on the commissioners at Pittsburgh, who had it not in their power to grant longer time as their own authority was to expire in a few days.

On the terms proposed by the commissioners not being decided on by the committee of 60, they withdrew them, and substituted new ones to be subscribed by the people individually in their town meetings, or election districts ; this mode of taking



the sense of the people had been recommended by the committee of 60, and some of the new conferees appointed the method of taking the sense of the people in districts, and others in townships for their respective counties.

The test to be subscribed was in the following words: "I do solemnly promise henceforth to submit to the laws of the United States; and that I will not directly or indirectly oppose the execution of the act for raising a revenue on distilled spirits and stills, and that I will support as far as the law requires the civil authority in affording the protection due to all officers and other citizens."

These terms were agreed to on the 2d September, but it was the 4th before they were got printed ready for the conferees to leave Pittsburgh; consequently there was but six days to spread the necessary information through a country, containing 70,000 inhabitants, (exclusive of the extensive county of Bedford, for which the test was also intended,) spread over a territory not much less extensive than the state of Connecticut, which sends seven members to Congress, and interspersed with mountains and large bodies of unseated lands. Four of the conferees not attending left some large districts wholly without the means of information, but though exertions were made to circulate the necessary information, yet there was no opportunity of impressing on the cautious citizens, who had from an excess of prudence declined attending all the former meetings, the necessity of attending this one, and the people generally had no opportunity of perusing the test they were required to subscribe, until the

hour they met on the ground to sign their names ; nor then had they had time, or opportunity for deliberately making up their minds.

The word *solemnly* was considered as an oath, and from henceforth, as an acknowledgement of having offended heretofore, which with much the greater number of the inhabitants in general, and many districts with respect to the whole inhabitants, was not true. The commissioners indeed agreed that those objectionable words should be stricken out, and published it in the gazette ; but the gazette did not, nor could not arrive in most places till after the day of signing. In some places however the people suppressed these words themselves. The word indirectly was understood by many as calculated to bind them from even petitioning against the excise law for the future, and the short space of an hour or two at a confused meeting did not afford leisure nor composure for those who were capable, and so disposed, to inform and advise the people. It is well known that a legislative body composed of the wisest citizens will not pass a law for the least important purpose, without various readings on several different days ; it could not be expected that an uninformed mass of people could make up their mind to subscribe what amounted to a new test of allegiance, with so little time or composure for deliberation. The difficulty was much increased by the number and smallness of the districts in which they were convened ; this gave an opportunity, for such as seldom attended elections, and whose voice was never heard on other public occasions, who had not horses to ride nor cloaths to put on, to attend the meetings, overaw them,

and insult the very persons, by whose sympathy their families had been preserved from famine. This took place in some townships and small districts, where no excesses had formerly been committed. By this description I do not mean to implicate the industrious poor. There were no people behaved better than most of those. I have observed striking instances of the virtue and usefulness of this class of men; their advice was often attended to, when men who were on ordinary occasions influential, would not be heard. It is known, that to all new settlements there is a constant ingress of the most indolent people, who are not only slothful, but ignorant and obdurate, and who having nothing to lose and little expectation of bettering their condition by industry, delight in promoting confusion. This description of people was become bold and dangerous at this period, and the non-attendance of a great proportion of those who having given no offence were determined to *sign* no test, gave the greater opportunity in some places for disorderly persons to domineer; they did so in some places to such a degree as to prevent in a great measure the design of the meeting from being obtained. Though they did not exceed a fourth or a fifth of the number present, yet desperation and threats of burning supplied the place of numbers, and it was not thought prudent on that day to put the law in execution, as the country districts did not know the situation the county towns were in, or whether taking persons to prison might not lead to further riots.

In the result, however, out of above forty different places of meeting for the purpose of subscribing the assurances, at only two of them were the papers torn by

a desperate banditti. One of these was at the place where the people who needed an amnesty were numerous, the other was that in which I reside, where very few had been guilty of any excesses. At one place in Allegany county the signing was prevented by violence or terror, where it was the interest of many to have subscribed; at a few other such places, the subscribing was done with difficulty. Nevertheless those who had been deeply engaged in the excesses generally signed, except a few of the most ignorant and obstinate; there were some indeed who had dared to engage in the greatest outrages, who had not courage to subscribe for their own safety, lest they would be considered as deserters.

In some of the townships next to the frontiers, even the people who attended the meetings absolutely refused to sign, because there were none among them who had given offence, or at any time opposed the execution of the excise law. They took it amiss that they were called upon; and some districts in the upper parts of Washington were not warned. Indeed the people generally, who had been much distressed all round the extensive frontier, had no hand in originating, or carrying on the disturbances, nor did they appear at all in it, till they were solicited to send delegates to Parkison's ferry to promote the restoration of order, and as far as I could observe or be informed, they uniformly contributed to that desirable object in every instance, till the subscribing was called for, and then they said, *let them sign in the places where they are involved*. Some, however, were persuaded to do it from policy. They had not only behaved well themselves, but from some places offered

their services, particularly to general Wilkin to quell the insurgents.

The whole county of Fayette acted on the same principle. They had submitted to the authority of the marshal, and regularly entered for their appearance to the action, and knew that there were few if any criminals among them; they therefore refused to sign to the terms of the commissioners; but in order to satisfy government with respect to their intention, they formed resolutions of their own, and at a meeting of delegates from the several townships, unanimously agreed to submit to the laws of the United States and of this state, and not to oppose directly or indirectly the acts for raising a revenue on distilled spirits, stills, &c. agreeably to the terms proposed by the commissioners to the committee of sixty. They also called on the people to meet in election districts, to declare their submission to the laws. Comparatively few attended, especially in the places furthest removed from the disturbances, and where least heat or agitation had prevailed; of those who did attend, 580 voted for submission, and 280 against it. Yet notwithstanding the refusal to sign the terms prescribed by the whole county of Fayette, and by several townships in the north of Westmoreland, there was only one prisoner brought from Fayette, and none from the other, when the judge and the army went into the country; the person brought from Fayette was found to be innocent; he had been in Kentucky when the riots were committed in the western country.

The commissioners returned to Philadelphia before the day of signing, except Mr. Rofs, who stayed to

receive the lists of subscribers, and to observe the temper that would be discovered on that occasion. He also was obliged to go to Philadelphia before all the returns were come to hand. The tumults that took place on the day of signing, and the heat and agitation which discovered itself in a few places, particularly among the uninformed part of the Germans, for a few days after it, induced several of the judges and other persons of information to agree in opinion with Mr. Ross, that it would be necessary to have an army sent into the country ; but this opinion was also made up without time for information, and consequently was soon changed. It was but a few days, in some places the very next day, after signing, that many of those who had been most riotous on the day of signing, came, some of them in tears, begging permission to sign ; in some places their signing was received, with certification, that it would not be admitted as a claim for amnesty, in other places they were refused the privilege altogether. When they reflected, they saw that they were deserted by those on whom they had depended, and who, perhaps, had advised them, or by their example encouraged them to mischief.

From a view of the subject it is evident, that if but one week had been allowed for the people to deliberate on the assurances they were required to sign, the submission to the laws would have been complete, at least there would have been so few exceptions, that they would have given no alarm ; there were none within my knowledge but what would have signed in half that time. Signing associations, binding the citizens to assist one another in support of the laws, had been promoted

at Pittsburgh by general Wilkin and others, and generally signed; this example was generally and successfully imitated; such an association was entered into in the township in which I reside, the third day after the signing, and in many other places equally soon.

The commissioners, however, are not to blame for not giving longer time; their own powers expired with the time given to the people; they were nearly expired before it was determined to submit it to the people, in that manner, and it was the influence of terror on the committee of 60 at Brownsville, occasioned by the wickedness of a few, perhaps, of one man, which rendered submitting it to the people necessary. The reasons, that determined the President to limit the authority of the commissioners to so short a period, will be given in their proper place.

Though it may be admitted that there was a latent predisposition to violence among a few individuals, who had been formerly attached to the inspector, and encouraged by him to oppose excise officers, under the state, and though this was known to himself, and he was prepared for defence, yet no such thing was generally known in the country, and its breaking out at the time was owing to accident, and circumstances of a local nature. Inconsiderate and useless resistance by shedding blood too abundantly, which the inspector was the more successful in doing, by being prepared in a manner of which the assailants were not aware, excited a more formidable attack, and drew many into the vortex of riot, who would have been far from engaging in it, if they had had time to deliberate on the conse-

quences. Numbers thus inconsiderately involved in crimes became desperate, and endeavoured by drawing others into the same situation to make it a common cause, and being unfortunately aided in these mistaken views by Bradford, Marshall, and others, who attempted to give a more violent complexion and greater magnitude to the mischief, by drawing the whole western country into a combination against the excise law, and for this purpose contriving the rendezvous at Braddock's field, and using every means to inflame the minds of the citizens, and to overawe with terror those who might oppose their designs, and for this purpose magnifying the numbers at Braddock's field, and advertising that thousands had been on their march to join them, from places where there was not a person who knew of the rendezvous. I say, by these mad exertions, the insurrection progressed for a few days like the paroxysm of an inflammatory fever, spent its force in frequent irregular convulsions, and finally subsided almost as suddenly, and to many as unexpectedly as it commenced; the most alarming symptoms were discovered at Braddock's field, and the last struggle was a feeble attempt to raise a party a few miles south of Greensburgh.

The courts had not been interrupted in their progress, on the Monday previous to the day appointed for signing the assurances to government, the court at Greensburgh was opened by a sensible speech, well adapted to the occasion, by president Addison, and he was not insulted nor the business of the court interrupted, and he went through the circuit without meeting with any embarrassment. As the ocean which is agitated for some time after the storm has spent its force,



so was the agitation that appeared among the people after the day of signing; but they afterwards became calm as formerly, except as to the anxiety that arose from apprehensions of what was to follow, and reflections on the past.

The agitation having so perfectly subsided, an advertisement was put in the gazette, calling on the Parkison's ferry delegates to hold another meeting on the 2d of October. The meeting was advertised by some of the same persons who had but about a week before given their opinion that an army would be necessary; but so sudden and perfect was the present calm, that they were convinced that such assurances of submission could now be procured, as would render the march of the army totally unnecessary.

The delegates met, and agreed to the following resolutions: "Resolved unanimously that it is the opinion of this meeting that if the signature of the submission be not universal it is not so much owing to any existing disposition to oppose the laws, as to a want of time and information to operate a correspondent sentiment; and with respect to the greatest number, a prevailing consciousness of their having had no concern in any outrage, and an idea that their signature would imply a sense of guilt."

By another resolve they gave assurances of submission in the very words prescribed by the commissioners; and by a third they resolved to send David Redick and myself, with these assurances, to the President of the United States, with authority in behalf of the meeting, to explain to him the more circumstantially the state of the country, in order to enable him to judge whether

an armed force would now be necessary to support the civil authority in those counties.

I had not attended this meeting, but the resolves were transmitted to me, and a letter from president Addison, assuring me that he had conversed with distillers and others, residing in the parts of the county where the opposition originated, and that they had given the strongest assurances of their submission. I had otherwise sufficient proofs that the laws could be supported in every other part of the western counties.

## C H A P. XII.

ON the road to Carlisle we heard alarming accounts of the army, rendezvoused at that place, being very ungovernable and exceedingly inflamed against the people of the western country indiscriminately. We still flattered ourselves that these reports were not well founded, till we met with some officers of the western army on their way to Pittsburgh with recruits, who confirmed the reports we had heard from others. We lodged at a tavern three miles from Carlisle, and passed for travellers going to Philadelphia, which we intended doing if we should not meet the President at Carlisle; but when the people of the house discovered that we were from the western counties, they were much alarmed, and pressed us exceedingly to abandon the thought of going through Carlisle, offering at the same time to conduct us by another rout. They described the rage of the army against all the people from the western counties, in terms which they thought sufficient to

deter us from approaching it ; and in giving a relation of the licentiousness and ferocity of the troops, told us of their having already killed two men in cold blood.

We had no sooner dismounted at the tavern in Carlisle, than I was asked to walk aside by a gentleman who was waiting to see me. The Carlisle paper had mentioned our coming ; consequently we were expected. He informed me of the inflammation prevailing in the army being apparently too strong to be restrained, and of their threats against us, and advised that we should be cautious how we exposed ourselves ; that the resentment against us was particularly exasperated from an apprehension that it was our errand, to give such assurances to the President, as were intended to prevent their march to the Monongahela. He assured me that his object was purely to prevent injury to us, and dishonour to the army, and requested me to pay attention to his advice. He had been a respectable officer during the late war, but not attached to the present army, nor a dweller in or near that place. I have not had an opportunity since that time of acknowledging his well timed and humane caution. Though I did not credit the extent of his impressions at the time, I was soon convinced they were not exaggerated. We observed the proofs of it in the behaviour of several individuals, and were confirmed by the information of others, in and out of the army.

• Having early in the morning waited on the President to deliver the papers, and obtained on appointment for an interview, we withdrew in a short time. This was to have been expected ; it was about seven o'clock ; but before ten the report was current through both the town and the army, that the President had dri-

ven us out in fix minutes, and was not to see us again ; and notwithstanding the President's established character for discretion and politeness, and the frequent interviews to which we were admitted, this ridiculous story was believed by many in the army during the whole expedition, and has been reported since, through distant parts of the United States. Long after the return of the army, I was told it by one of the generals who commanded in the expedition, and who was surprised to hear that it was not true.

Though we were cautious of mixing with the army at large, we took every opportunity of conversing with the officers from different places, in order to have an opportunity of removing the mistaken impressions, and correcting the false information, they had received, and to know more perfectly the general character of the army. In one instance observing a regiment newly arrived from Philadelphia ; as soon as the men were dismissed from parade, we mixed with such of the officers as we were acquainted with, and dined in company with the Colonel.

When we informed him of the successful exertions that had been made to restore submission to the laws ; and mentioned one individual, who had distinguished himself with industry and address, he answered us that that very man, if he was met with, would be skewered, shot, or hanged on the first tree. I had before been informed of two lists put into the hands of some in the army, containing the names of certain persons, who were to be so treated when met with, and that the very person alluded to by the Colonel was in both of them. I understood I had the honour to fill a place in one myself. The colonel treated us decently, but his ex-

pressions confirmed my belief of a fact, the truth of which I had till now willingly doubted.

But the designs of assassination were not against us exclusively. Those among themselves who had reasoned in favour of the subjection of the military to the civil law, or suggested that those who killed a citizen in cool blood should answer to the proper courts, and that the army were only employed to aid the Judiciary in the exercise of its proper functions, and not to usurp or exercise those functions themselves, were in as much danger, and equally the objects of threats, as the whisky men, and in fact were called so.

Two men had been killed, one on the great road near Lebanon, and the other at a house in the neighbourhood of Carlisle. The one on the road was killed by the Jersey troops. He provoked an officer by foolish and insulting language, and on laying hold on one of the bayonets of the guard, who were ordered to arrest him, he was run through the body. He was evidently drunk or deranged. Surely so many men in arms could easily have secured one unarmed fool, without killing him. The other was killed by a light horseman from Philadelphia, who went into the country to seize some persons who had assisted at erecting liberty poles in Carlisle. The young man, who was killed, was not only innocent, but very unwell. The party left him under guard of one of their number, until they would search the barn for others. The sick boy declaring his innocence, and that he was not able to stand, attempted to go into the house without leave; the light horseman ordered him to stop, on the peril of being shot, and if he could not stand to sit or lay

down, and in the mean time cocked his pistol. When the boy was in the posture of laying himself down, and the light horseman about to uncock his pistol, it went off and shot the boy mortally. I state this case, as I had it from the best authority, and as taken from an examination of the light horseman.

But admitting, as I believe we ought, that those acts of man-killing were not murder, yet they ought not to have been done, because they might easily have been prevented; after the President had censured the army, by his discourses, of the propriety, and enforced by his authority the necessity of the subordination of the military to the civil power, and after he had given an unequivocal testimony of his sincerity by obliging those who killed the two men, to enter recognisance with bail, for standing their trial at court, no more accidents of the kind happened.

The authority and influence of the President had lowered the tone, though not changed the temper of the outrageous part of the army, while we were at Carlisle. The proper attention he paid to us, on account of the errand we came on, and the restraint his orders imposed on their designs, gave great mortification to that part of them that continued longest in Carlisle; the last interview to which we were admitted was on the evening previous to the President's fitting out for Patowmack. While the conversation continued, a general officer, with others, walked before the window, and railed against the President for conversing with us; saying, that he never would recover the popularity that he lost by countenancing insurgents. Owing however to that salutary restraint, thus imposed on them

by the President, all the fire was spent in threatening what they would do ; laying their hands on their swords, which many of them had not been accustomed to wear, they would swear there was no need of judges and juries, let them only see the men and they would ~~fewer~~ fewer them:

I was the less surprised at this display of the inflammatory agitation of the human mind, that I had so recently been acquainted with its ebullitions, in a variety of efforts in the course of its fermentation and settling on its lees in the western country. I had heard the word of terror pronounced in such loud accents, as that like a magic spell it chilled the blood and petrified the spirits, almost as far as the report of it vibrated with the air that wafted the alarming sound. I had observed in the rapid reign of indiscretion, plans executed almost as soon as an infatuated imagination conceived them and some thousands of thoughtless, of outrageous, and of well disposed citizens rendezvoused together in one heterogeneous mass, and tens of thousands put on paper as on their way to rendezvous, (who by the by had not heard of the plan) and all for no visible object, nor to answer any purpose, but expose the madness of those who conducted the career of folly. I had seen the effervescence in human society operate so powerfully as to throw the scum to the surface, and cause the purer parts to succumb for a moment, so far as to fix a general character of impurity. While things were in this state, I have heard men talk as if they were all Samsons, who each could kill his thousands with the jaw bone of an ass. I had known myself and many others threatened with having our property burned, ourselves tarred, feathered, &c. but saw none of these



dreadful threats executed. After the poor excisemen were overset, there was no person otherwise hurt, than by the effects of temporary terror on the mind. I knew of a black list too, containing a certain number of the best citizens to be hanged or shot, who are all yet living. I clearly saw that the very same spirit was operating in the army, that had thus convulsed the western country, and hoped that it would also evaporate in air, especially as it would be held under restraint by the authority and influence of discreet and experienced officers. I had no doubt but that there was a majority of well disposed people in the army, who wished to support the laws, as well as there had been in the western country, though by the blustering noise and high handed measures of the rioters, people at a distance were induced to believe that all the inhabitants were insurgents. By mixing with the people myself, I found this was not the case, even where the outrages originated. In like manner, by taking every prudent opportunity of mixing with the army, I was convinced that many were disposed to submit to discipline and support the laws; but these were not the men who made the noise. The cause however was very different; the cause of the army was laudable, and their turning out meritorious; the cause of the insurgents on the other hand was criminal. However when I reflected on the vast mass of undisciplined men, who were collected and so well equipped, assuming the height of military airs, without the habits of military discipline, having no apprehensions of danger to press them together, no enemy to encounter, nor in fact any object to afford them an opportunity of displaying

their prowess; I say, when I reflected on these circumstances, together with the inflammatory symptoms which were so prevalent, and might soon pervade the whole mass; it gave me unpleasant sensations. I was not without apprehensions that such convulsions might be the result, as would not only be ruinous to the western counties, but prostrate the very government and laws, which they were called forth to support. I knew they had shed blood, in a manner that discovered that they were not very solicitous to avoid it. I knew that some of no mean rank were mortified that those who had shed blood were obliged to enter recognisance, and give bail. It is well known that at Carlisle the army was once in that situation, that one part of it was ordered to charge the others, and if a discretion, which by strict rules might have been esteemed criminal, had not been exercised by the officer who was ordered to make the charge, brothers blood might have been shed in abundance. It is well remembered that the streets and avenues of Carlisle were occupied by the army, during the night, and that an apprehension of the town being burnt excited a general panic. To what height these alarming heats might have gone, if the President had not arrived so seasonably, it is impossible to tell. Though there were officers possessed of virtue and experience there before he arrived, yet their authority was not sufficient to preserve order. Indeed while the army continued at Carlisle, drinking was carried to greater excess, than I had heard of it being done among the insurgents, and wine will inflame the passions as much or more than even whisky.

However it is a question that never will be decided, whether the authority and influence of a President would have been effectual if that President had not been general Washington. The man, that had commanded our armies successfully through the late war, and whose military character was so respectable, had an influence over military men, that few others could expect to possess.

There was not so much of the inflammatory spirit observable in the left wing of the army as in the other, nor was there any person skilled by them, by accident or otherwise. In one or two instances, where there was danger of some foolish men who mixed with that wing being skewered, general Morgan, by pretending to reserve them for ignominious punishment, saved them, till they could be safely dismissed, or kept his men from killing them by threatening to kill them himself. He kept his division on the parade while on their march, until he called on the people residing near the encampment, and paid them immediately a reasonable price for what the army had taken or destroyed; consequently there were few complaints made by the citizens of marauding or destruction committed by that wing. General Smith, who commanded the Maryland brigade, complied strictly with the President's orders in discharging such of the men as were disorderly. At fort Cumberland he called on the Captains to make report of characters of that description, of which he discharged about 50 in one day; this not only purged the army, but was a caution to those that remained; the consequence was that the route on which he marched cannot be traced by the sufferings and complaints of

the citizens; nor was there so high a degree of inflammation among the Maryland troops as appeared in the rest of the army; even among the troops from Virginia the tone was not so high, nor the spirit so ungovernable, as in the right wing; however, more frequent examples of punishment were made among them.

Notwithstanding the inflammatory and ungovernable spirit that prevailed in the army, it was restrained from actual outrage; but doing this required great address. If a severe example had not been made of two men in the camp at Carnaghan's in Westmoreland, for disobedience and mutiny, it is the opinion of the most experienced officers who were there, that the country would have been ruined; and there were such serious apprehensions of their punishment occasioning a general mutiny, that it was a matter of great hesitation with the commander in chief of that wing, and other officers, whether the sentence could be executed without a general mutiny. Through the decision, however, of general Irwin, to whose personal intrepidity it was owing that the culprits were brought to trial, and through the confidence that was entertained in general Chambers's brigade, the sentence was executed without disturbance. By way of precaution, general Chambers had his brigade paraded in such a manner as to be ready to charge the regiment to whom the culprits belonged, and in front of which the sentence was executed, if a mutiny had been attempted. This instance of discipline is believed to have had an excellent effect in preventing a total subversion of discipline, and restraining the disposition of marauding, which at that time threatened to involve the country in great distress. It

will appear hereafter that an apprehension of a mutinous disposition prevailing in the army, had a disagreeable effect on the proceedings of the judiciary.

General Chambers had made some examples of discipline, before his brigade left the settlements, where it was raised. This was no doubt one reason why it set such an example of good behaviour and sustained the character of being the most orderly brigade in the right wing of the army. To this I heard the commander in chief of that wing, secretary Hamilton, and many other officers bear ample testimony; but there was another reason, of greater weight, which influenced that character.

The session of assembly, which was convened during the insurrection, observing a reluctance in the militia to turnout in their classes, and considering that there was a great number of citizens in the lower counties who had religious scruples against bearing arms, gave a bounty to encourage the enlistment of volunteers, and many of the citizens whose duty it was to go procured substitutes. The militia corps from Philadelphia, and the counties near it, were chiefly composed of such of this description; there was a smaller proportion in general Chambers's brigade than in the others, and of consequence a greater proportion of such citizens as turned out in their proper classes; and it is among those that we may always expect to find the greatest respect paid to the laws. With orderly citizens, moral principles and a sense of honour will go far in supplying the want of discipline.

There was another description of volunteers, both from New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, who neither came

from the inducement of a bounty nor the expectation of plunder, but purely with a view to support the government and law. Many of these were men of large property, and extensively engaged in business. They came at much expence and made great sacrifices, many of them being unused to personal hardships flood the unavoidable fatigue of such a journey beyond expectation and without murmuring. Indeed I was agreeably surprised to see them arrive at Bonnet's camp in such good health and spirits, after so much fatigue. It had rained on them almost every day, from the time they left Bedford till they arrived at that place, and though they were every way the best equipped and supplied of any troops that ever had marched in the service of the United States, yet the excessive rains and exceeding badness of the roads rendered the march very fatiguing and uncomfortable, especially as a proportion of the road was on mountains naturally swampy. I do not say that none of them murmured, for some of them filled the news-papers with complaints and sarcasms on the whisky-men. By reading some of those letters, that were published, it would have been thought the county of Bedford was full of the most daring criminals, and the army harassed to death, pursuing them over roads, that endangered the life of man to pass, &c. whereas there were only four prisoners taken or fought after in that county, two of whom resided within a few miles of Bedford town, the other two were from the Glades, 30 miles distant from Bedford, and no resistance was attempted by them. In some of these letters, the difficulties they encountered are magnified to a very high degree. "In short no expedition during the last

war, nor even that of Hannibal over the Alps, could equal the insuperable hardships which we suffered, is the language of one of them. But these foolish exaggerations ought no more to fix the character of these corps, than the conduct of a few desperate insurgents ought to fix the character of all the inhabitants of the four western counties.

It must be expected, that a proportion of those who went out as volunteers, in what were called the gentleman corps, were men of the most ardent spirits, who perhaps mistook the warmth of their passions for patriotism; for, it is not uncommon in either religion or politics to find mankind mistake the agitation and bias of their own passions for zeal or patriotism, and in the case before us there might have been incidental prejudices arising from other causes; but notwithstanding the inflammatory materials of which these corps were in part composed, I have authority for saying, that they not only submitted to fatigue with the perseverance of veterans, but most of them acted with a becoming subordination to orders; among these, however, more than any other corps, did the blustering threats prevail, which spread such a general alarm.

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### C H A P. XIII.

**O**NE evil of a peculiar nature arose from this state of things. The militia corps being in so great a proportion composed of substitutes, or persons induced to enlist by bounty, &c. and the militia generally not being dressed in uniform, they were despised by those who composed the gentleman corps, who always spoke of them in the language of contempt, and to this day, in relating the incidents of the campaign, every thing bad or mean, that was done, they say was done by the militia. Perhaps this had too much foundation in truth, owing to the materials of which the militia was in part composed; but it is exceedingly impolitic to render the militia contemptible. The character of the militia ought to be had in the highest honour, and the laws should be so calculated as to render them the most respectable. They are as much the representatives of the citizens, when they are called to support the laws of their country, as th

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members of Congress are their Representatives to make those laws.

To render the militia respectable, no substitute should be admitted, unless in extreme cases, and even in those cases the person admitted should be of equal character, and have as much at stake in the result, as the citizen whose place he supplies. In short he ought to have an equal stake, at risk, in the commonwealth, and no exoneration should be admitted on account of religious scruples. Those citizens, who have no scruples against being legislators, magistrates, or jurors, ought not to be admitted to benefit by such scruples, when they are necessarily called on, to support the laws of their country, which are the common inheritance of all the citizens. The man, who enjoys affluence or the honour of holding public offices, ought not on that account to be exempted from the risk and fatigue of militia service, in support of the government, in which he has more at stake than his less fortunate neighbours. In the distribution of natural evils, the abodes of honour and affluence are not more free from diseases and pains, than the abodes of those, who enjoy a more scanty portion, neither ought they to be more indulged when political diseases shake the commonwealth. In such cases they ought to submit to common risk with those, whose lot it is to be in equal stations in the service in which they are employed. To have the militia distinguished into gentlemen privates, and plebeian privates, is wholly anti-republican. A standing army is preferable to a militia thus distinguished. In the late expedition, the name *militia* was understood to have the same idea affixed to it, as *plebeian* or

*lower order of citizens.* An army, arranged in this manner, never can have confidence within itself, nor embrace the confidence of their fellow citizens.

When it becomes absolutely necessary to call out the militia to suppress insurrections, or to aid the civil magistrate against combinations too powerful for the ordinary administration of the laws ; if the militia were composed of the citizens drawn in their proper classes, no one corps could be held in contempt by the other, and every corps would have within itself a sufficient number of orderly citizens, whose respect to their own character and to the laws would be sufficient security against marauding and other outrages. A militia, called out on these principles, in this country where the principles of government are so generally understood, and where mildness of temper is a leading feature in our character, would certainly be the least dangerous, and also the most successful ; for the insurgents in this case would be less desperate, as they would have less to dread. They would consider the army, as their fellow citizens, discharging their duty in obedience to the laws, on the same principles with a court, jury or sheriff, and not as officious knight-errants, who were stimulated, perhaps, by the resentments of political party spirit, or the antipathies sometimes arising from local situation. Nor would they view them as an undisciplined band of substitutes, induced to undertake the service by the receipt of bounty and the expectation of plunder, without any regard to the love of the government or the detestation of crimes. This description of men are just so much worse than a standing ar-

my, as they are less in the habits of military subordination.

Being informed from the best authority at Carlisle, that in the city of Philadelphia, every person, except the volunteers, whose duty it was to go on the western expedition, and who had the means of doing it, procured substitutes, it is equally certain that this was also the case in those counties, where people entertained religious scruples, and to a certain degree through all the states, on which the requisitions were made. From these circumstances, and finding that the word militia was a term of reproach attached to the class regiments by the volunteer corps, I was the less surprized at the licentious and inflammatory spirit, which at that period formed so conspicuous a trait in the character of the army, and which it cost the President so much labour and attention to subdue. Indeed it gave me very sensible pleasure to discover such corps, as contained a considerable proportion of citizens who turned out in obedience to the laws, and not from any sinister inducement; as these were the men who had the greatest common interest in supporting the government, and restoring obedience to the laws, where their authority had been infringed. I had consequently the most confident expectations, that in their own conduct they would give a salutary example of obedience to that authority they were employed to support, and shew a respect to that order, which it was the object of the expedition to restore. And I felicitate myself and my country, that I was not disappointed in my expectation. The people of the western country generally had the same impressions; for I have been well informed that they discover-

ed much greater confidence in those citizens, who turned out in their classes, in obedience to the laws, and treated them with more respect, where they could distinguish them, than they did others.

The volunteer corps were more generally men of liberal education; and therefore as gentlemen had a sense of honour, and would not stoop to the baseness of plundering or committing wanton destruction, and the most respectable among them were sensible of the importance of setting an example of obedience to the laws in their own conduct; and even such of them as had but little respect to the laws, or who thought they were not obligatory on them in dealing with those, whose disobedience they were called to suppress, (and some of them considered every man who drank whiskey to be of that description) yet paid a reluctant respect to the express orders of the President; I say reluctant, for they murmured at them, and with difficulty submitted.

The ostentatious vaunts, and ferocious threats, loudly expressed by the blustering blades in these corps, which were perhaps exaggerated by fame, and the peculiar circumstance of their being composed in part of such characters, as never were seen in arms in the defence of their country, when the success and barbarity of a powerful invading enemy required the utmost exertions of all the virtue and energy the country could afford for its defence, at a time when the citizens of the most remote frontier settlements marched in the most inclement seasons to the distant shores in support of the then vibrating cause of virtue and mankind; I say, these circumstances made an impression unfavourable to the character of these corps in the minds of the for-

ber citizens generally through the state, but especially those in the western counties, who were the objects of their threats, without respect to innocence or guilt. These circumstances gave an apprehension that hatred to the western people generally, rather than patriotism, was the motive of their being volunteers in the cause; and as hatred always begets hatred and distrust, so it happened in this case, at least so far as to mar that confidence which well disposed people would otherwise have entertained; however, the discreet and humane behaviour, which some of these corps discovered on some trying occasions, went far to remove this prejudice; and it is certain that the licentiousness of a few contributed more than any other cause to fix these unfavourable impressions; but even that circumstance arose naturally out of the principles of their selections.

As that extreme degree of inflammation which discovered itself in the army, has been the occasion of serious reflection, and given ground to doubt, whether a militia army is the best calculated for the internal support of government, and their suitableness for that purpose is supposed to be rendered the more questionable by having recourse to historical facts, which relate to a war of brothers, from that of the ten tribes of Israel against Benjamin at Gibeah, down to modern times; it is proper therefore to examine further into the incidental, or extraneous causes of the inflammatory spirit in the army, besides what arose from its structure, and the other circumstances I have related; for if in the result of the enquiry, it should be decided against a militia, it will afford a strong, if not a conclusive, argument in favour of standing armies in time of peace, and if

this is once admitted, establishing an hereditary monarchy becomes absolutely necessary, as a thing of course, or at least, an aristocracy as firmly established, as that of Venice, with all its multifarious perplexity of checks and tyrannical guards, calculated for the eternal exclusion of equal liberty. But this mortifying result ought not to be admitted, without the strictest scrutiny and the fullest conviction.

That the citizens would have been considerably incensed at being called out from their farms and their merchandize, to go such a distance to support the execution of the laws, even though they themselves disapproved of the law that was opposed, would not have been surprising. But if there had been no extraneous excitements, sympathy would have been mingled with their resentments, and their object would have been to reclaim rather than kill, and to reconcile rather than insult. They would have been careful to distinguish the innocent from the guilty, and the ignorant and mistaken from the intentionally wicked, and have paid a sacred respect to the authority of the laws in their own deportment, while they were contributing to bring their fellow citizens to punishment for their disobedience. I speak of the temper discovered at Carlisle, rather than their after conduct ; in the result, however, it will appear, that that temper was not quite extinguished. Among the extraneous excitements may be reckoned the great pains that had been taken to set the conduct of the western country people indiscriminately in the most obnoxious point of view ; even those, who had exerted themselves with the greatest industry, were characterised as the chief promoters of the insur-

rection, and the outrages were greatly aggravated both with respect to their object and extent. Indeed the leading rioters themselves contributed to this last circumstance; they exceedingly magnified their own numbers, boasted of their prowess, and by blustering threats intimidated those who were opposed to them, and produced a scene of temporizing, for a time, in some places, which was well calculated to deceive the people in the eastern country; but it was at no time true that judges, magistrates, clergy, members of Congress and Assembly, were opposed to the execution of the law, nor that any of them even temporised, except in particular situations, and for a short time. These slanders were the reports of excisemen, and spies, and were not well founded.

The evident reluctance of the militia to turn out rendered it necessary to address them with recruiting orations, calculated to rouse their passions. For this purpose, trifling incidents were magnified into crimes, and the most orderly citizens were characterized as offenders. Indeed many were induced to expect, that the whole country would be given up to military execution and plunder.

When the commissioners were in Greenburgh on their return to Philadelphia, a few drunken worthless persons, one of whom had a complaint against a servant belonging to the chief-justice, came in the night to the tavern, where the commissioners lodged, and demanded entrance; but on being refused admittance, and threatened by the landlord to be fired on if they persisted, they retired for some time, but returning again they made another attempt, and threw some stones at the house, with which they broke one pane of glass in a window

in the second story. General Irwin upon this, putting his head out of the window, threatened to shoot some of them if they did not disperse; they immediately fled, and did not return again. The disturbance was not so great as even to awaken such of the commissioners as were asleep, but from what they were heard to say, there is no doubt but they designed to use the commissioners ill. They threatened to give the commissioners a hasty passage to Philadelphia, but they were few in number and of the meanest of the rabble; there was nothing serious to be apprehended from the attack. They have since been punished severely by the state courts, and if the governor has not remitted their fine, are yet in prison, for none of them had wherewith to pay it. This outrage was of so little importance that the commissioners did not even give it a place in the catalogue of riots contained in the report which they made to the President, as proofs that order was not sufficiently restored when they left the country. Yet this attempt, trifling and unimportant as it was, was in the recruiting harangues and popular orations, magnified to an alarming atrocity, and the whole country charged with being worse than savages, they having maltreated ambassadors of peace. I have myself seen members of the legislature mobbed and dragged out of their lodgings in the open day. I have seen the legislature itself kept in duress by a mob, obliged to do the most important business, for which they were not competent at the time. My own lodging and that of other members of the legislature have been attacked and a whole window broke in the dead of the night. I have known the houses of judges of the supreme court, and other respectable citizens, mobbed in



the same manner, and all this was done even in the city of Philadelphia, and by citizens, several of whom occupy high official stations and eat the bread of the government at this day, and though those combinations were too strong for the ordinary power of the civil magistrate at the time, yet no extraordinary methods were taken to suppress them. The temporary inflammation was suffered to subside, and the whole city was never charged with being guilty of it. No respectable citizen was engaged in breaking the pane of glass at Greensburgh, yet this circumstance, blazoned as it was, had an amazing effect in exciting the militia to turn out, and to inflame them against the whole people of the western counties. In going to war with savages, we often hear advocates for extending mercy to them, but the people of the western country were, by those who then gave the tone to public opinion, considered as wild beasts only fit for extermination, and to skewer the Whisky-men, not to reclaim them, or to aid the judicary, was the declared object both in New-Jersey and Pennsylvania. I have the charity to believe, however, because I wish to believe it, that in moments of cool reflection many of them recollected that numbers of those very men whom they exterminated in imagination, crossed the mountains in the depths of the winter snows, and traversed the frozen roads of the lower country, when their path might have been traced by their blood, to save the city of Philadelphia from the British, and to protect their brethren at the most distant shores of New-Jersey.

One regiment of troops, for three years, and another of militia, marched from Westmoreland in the winter

of 1776, when our cause was at the lowest ebb. The exertions and service of this regular regiment was perhaps equal to that of any other on the then establishment, and the militia distinguished themselves in a skirmish with the British near Woodbridge, as well as in the discharge of other dangerous and fatiguing services.

The publication I have already mentioned, published by one who was a friend of government, and who wrote in the character and manner of an insurgent, on purpose to excite the militia in New-Jersey and the lower counties of Pennsylvania, had an incredible effect in exciting and inflaming the citizens of that state and others; particularly the following words contained in it: "Brothers, you must not think to frighten us with fine arranged lists of infantry, cavalry and artillery, composed of your water-melon armies taken from the Jersey shores; they would cut a much better figure in warring with the crabs and oysters about the capes of Delaware. It is a common thing for Indians to fight your best armies at the proportion of one to five; therefore we would not hesitate a moment to attack this army at the rate of one to ten &c." This, together with the ridicule contained in it against the commissioners, pasted up on the market house, and published in the gazette, at the very crisis when the necessity of arming the citizens depended on the decisions of the moment, connected with a misrepresentation of the insult offered to the commissioners of peace at Greenburgh, excited indignation and rage in almost every breast. This dialogue, having been ascribed to Brackenridge, on account of a faint imitation of his style,

which the author attempted, together with a letter from him to Mr. Tench Coxe of Philadelphia, wrote at a time when there was danger of letters being intercepted, and which it seems was misunderstood, occasioned a very high degree of resentment against him, and the whole western country.

A report made by the secretary of the treasury to the President, containing a narrative of the instances of the opposition made to the execution of the excise law in the western counties, was also calculated to inflame the army in a high degree.

The object of this report, however, was not solely to influence and inflame the militia against the western country, but perhaps to convince the associate judge of the propriety of giving the important certificate, necessary to enable the President to call forth the militia, and the President of the propriety of exercising that power.

The narrative begins with denouncing those people for holding and circulating opinions, which if they were criminal, had been entertained and circulated by the most respectable authority in the United States long before, and it goes on to enumerate the acts of opposition with the highest colouring they would possibly bear, and intermixes real facts with misrepresentations, or even worse, and concludes in such a manner as to leave an impression that there was not a good citizen in that country but the excise-officers. This coming from so respectable a quarter, not only made a deep impression on the militia, but excited those who were the secretary's admirers to a high degree of inflammation; and to make the greatest exertions to inflame others.

against those who were citizens of the western country ; by these no difference was made, between those who were guilty of breaking, and those who were active in supporting, the laws, nor between those who resided near where the riots prevailed, and those who lived a day's journey distant. Further observations will be made on this report in another place.

I have already mentioned that the inspector and Marshal left Pittsburgh in a canoe, and going down the Ohio till they were past the Pennsylvania line, came through Virginia till they got over the mountains. I have also mentioned that three or four others were very tyrannically and foolishly expelled from Pittsburgh, during the ascendant of Bradford, when his terror gave efficacy to his demands, when the citizens of Pittsburgh were under apprehensions that that place was doomed to destruction, and when many others would have wished themselves and their property well away from it. Pittsburgh is situated on the verge of the settled part of the country, and when the rendezvous was at Braddock's field, the communication between it and the country was in a great measure cut off.

Several of those who were thus expelled felt themselves exceedingly hurt, and exposed the character of the people indiscriminately, in a manner, that while it procured sympathy to themselves, at the same time excited indignation against the citizens of the western country. The inspector and marshal might have come very safely through the western counties by going a few miles up the Allegany river. The roads north of Greensburgh were not ambuscaded, nor am I convinced

that the apprehension of the roads having been waylaid at any time was well founded, except when the mail was robbed; but this outrage gave reasonable ground to suspect that they were near the Monongahela. The others that were expelled were accompanied by two members of the Pittsburgh committee as far as Greensburgh, and saw no appearance of any interruption on the road. Colonel Nevil halted in the eastern parts of Westmoreland till after the Parkison ferry meeting, and was not disturbed.

A democratic society had been erected at Washington town, a few months preceding the insurrection, and it published some intemperate resolutions respecting the conduct of government relative to the navigation of the Mississippi, the appointment of a chief justice and a senator as ambassadors to Europe, &c. But I do not remember that they said any thing against the excise law. Their resolutions were written in imitation of resolutions that had been published in Kentucky. Though there is no proof that these publications had any influence in promoting the insurrection, yet the damned democratic societies, as they were called, were considered as the cause of it by many in the army; from the generals down to the privates. I found too, that it was generally thought that the country was full of those societies, though in fact there was but one, and that one had been of short duration and composed of but few members, several of whom I find were of the best disposed citizens; some of them, however, took a prominent station in the insurrection, of which number Mr. Bradford was one.

The journals of Congress and the debates published

in the news-papers in the winter following; will give a standing testimony of the irritation that prevailed at that time against democratic societies, not only in the army, but in the councils of the United States. This attempt in government to suppress popular societies had a tendency to revive them when they were on the decline. I have ever thought it impolitic in government to denounce, where it cannot punish. Societies cannot be suppressed in a free government; nor should it be attempted. They will do good or ill according to the good sense and discretion of those who compose them, therefore in order to reform societies we must begin with making men wiser and better; when they blazon the measures of administration or panegyrize the persons who conduct them, they are not denounced, therefore when they do otherwise they must be tolerated.

After making competent allowances for those extraneous causes of irritation, and for the materials of which many of the militia corps were composed, &c: a decision in favour of employing the militia, when an armed force is absolutely necessary to be employed in supporting the execution of civil or criminal process, is conclusive. I say when an armed force is absolutely necessary, for surely a sheriff's *posse*, taken from the mass of the freeholders, is the most proper force for that purpose. It has the example of past ages, and the testimony of experience in its favour; and if this force had been employed in due season, another force would not have been necessary in the western counties.

It is beyond my purpose to enquire or develop what effects would have resulted from employing a stand-

ing army in the execution of civil or criminal process ; but when the revengeful temper, and nefarious endeavours to gratify that temper, through influence obtained in the army and with the judiciary, that was exhibited in the western expedition, and which will be related in the sequel, is considered, it will readily be admitted, that if a mercenary army had been employed on that occasion in preference to a militia, instead of the puny attempts that were made, there would have been successful exertions, to sacrifice innocent victims to party spleen and personal rancour.

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C H A P. XIV:

ABOUT seven o'clock in the morning of the day on which we arrived at Carlisle, we waited on the President, and delivered to him the resolutions of assurance agreed on at the second meeting at Parkison's Ferry. We found him alone, and were received and treated with politeness and attention. After a short conversation he informed us that he was just going out about some business relating to the army when he saw us approaching, and that after breakfast he was going to see a division of the army march, that therefore he could not examine the papers at present, but would converse with us on the subject at ten o'clock that morning.

When we waited on him at ten o'clock, we found him in company with governor Howell, to whom he introduced us. Col. Hamilton then secretary of the treasury was present all the time, but governor Howell



withdrew before the conversation ended. The President opened the conversation with a discourse on the subject of the resolutions. In which he expatiated at considerable length on the evils occasioned by the insurrection, and the injury resulting from it to the cause of liberty and the general interests of republican government in the world. He said that the outrages, committed against the government, and the peace of the citizens in the western counties, had agitated the United States from one end to the other, like an electrical shock, and disposed them very generally to turn out in support of the violated laws; he spoke of the respectability of the army that was then at the places of rendezvous, or on their march, and the alacrity with which they left their farms and their merchandize, in order to support the government, and laws, when called on for that purpose, and said that it was found necessary to send repeated expresses to prevent too great a number from marching from some of the states, particularly New-Jersey, and that all the states that had been called on, appeared to have sent forward the quota required.

He lamented the sacrifices that the farmer and merchant were under the necessity of making, and the great expence that would be incurred to the government by the expedition. He expressed his astonishment, that the people were so blind to their own interest as not to have prevented the necessity of it by giving to the commissioners such assurances of their submission to the laws, as would have sheltered them from punishment and secured the restoration of order, and that we and other well disposed citizens

had not been more successful in persuading them to take that salutary course. He concluded his observations on this subject, by giving his opinion, that the resolutions which we had presented were not sufficiently unequivocal to justify him in dismissing the army, now when they were rendezvoused, and the greatest proportion of the expences incurred, and the sacrifices of the merchant and farmer already made. He appealed to our own knowledge, that the preparation for an expedition was the greatest part of the expence, and observed, that being thus far advanced, it would be necessary to obtain further and more ample assurances of submission, before he could dismiss the army, than perhaps would have been required at an earlier period; That the objects to be obtained by the expedition were unequivocal assurances of submission to the laws, and protection to the officers of the revenue for the future; and that the good dispositions of government, expressed by the commissioners, being rejected, and the march of the army rendered necessary, some atonements would be required for the infractions committed against the laws. Observing that the resolutions referred him to us for further information, he invited us to proceed in giving it to him.

We, in reply, expressed our unfeigned satisfaction at discovering that the authority of the United States could call forth so respectable and well equipped an army, to support the government and laws, when such a measure became necessary, and at the patriotism displayed by those who had made such sacrifices for that purpose; but expressed our sincere grief for the occasion that had rendered such a display of power and

patriotism necessary. We expressed our opinion, that a militia army was the most congenial to a republican government, and the most favourable to liberty, but suggested serious apprehensions that from some peculiar circumstances the present militia army, though so very respectable, had a more threatening aspect to the people of the western country than even a mercenary army; and suggested that their irritation and sense of insult might be in proportion to their wealth, respectability, and the sacrifices which they had made; and that from these circumstances the difficulty of introducing discipline, and preserving subordination to the laws in the army, might be increased. We acknowledged the wisdom and humanity, displayed by the President, in sending commissioners, vested with such ample authority to restore order, by granting so liberal an amnesty to the insurgents, and our grief that this beneficent measure had not rendered coercive measures unnecessary, and then proceeded to relate the circumstances which contributed to prevent that salutary measure from being completely successful.

In doing this, we stated briefly the unforeseen and untoward circumstances, that rendered it impossible for the well disposed people to prevent the commencement of the insurrection; such as their distance from each other, the hurry of the season, and the secrecy of the marshal's arrival and progress, which put it out of the power of the friends of order to make any arrangements for his protection, and to preserve the peace of the country; that it required time for the well disposed people to know in whom they could confide, and the unexpectedness and rapidity of the outrages at first

struck people with such astonishment, as required time for reflection before exertions could be made. The backwardness of well disposed people, who were innocent, to expose themselves, the terror that was spread abroad by those who became leaders among the insurgents, and the disapprobation of the excise law, even by many, who, though they were disposed to submit to it, hesitated some time before they would put themselves to risk for its support, rendered it impossible to put a stop to the disorders without time and labour. We detailed the imperious and unforeseen circumstances, that in a great measure frustrated the intention of the meeting of the committee of 60 at Redstone old fort, and the motives by which the innocent citizens were actuated in declining to attend the meetings, or refusing to sign the instrument of assurances submitted to them by the commissioners. We gave a candid account of the violent opposition that was given at some township meetings, and asserted, that this violent opposition, as far as was within our knowledge, was, with very few exceptions, made by the most ignorant and obstinate class of people, some of whom are to be found in all countries; that few of these having either character or property to lose, availed themselves of this season of disorder to insult judges, magistrates, and generally those people to whom they, on other occasions, had recourse for sustenance, or to whom they usually resorted for advice in their difficulties: And in the few places, where these gave disturbance, that their success was owing to their desperation, and not to the greatness of their number; that from the very circumstance of their having little or nothing to lose, their threats

of burning, and other acts of violence, were the more dreaded; yet that notwithstanding their threats, there had not been a single instance of their having been put in execution on this occasion. We stated, that these were not the people that ever could give trouble to government in settled times, and that most of them had come in, some of them in tears, within a few days, and requested to be permitted to sign the assurances; and that in many places they had been permitted to sign, with certification, however, that though it might go in abatement of their offence, yet it gave them no claim for an amnesty. We assured the President, that but few of those who opposed the signing had been guilty of other offences, except, perhaps, where the riots originated.

We also assured him, that in all the counties prosecutions had been commenced against such of them, as it was thought necessary and prudent for the present peace of the country to prosecute; and that what had been done in this way rendered it certain, that the public peace could be preserved, and atonements procured for infractions committed on the laws by the ordinary proceedings in the courts of justice; and gave it as our opinion, that if the powers of the commissioners had not expired so soon, order would have been perfectly restored, and satisfactory assurances of submission to the laws obtained. We informed him, that the newspapers, containing the orders to the militia to hold themselves in readiness to march, coming to Parkison's ferry meeting on the morning after the arrival of the commissioners had been announced, excited an inflammatory agitation of mind with many, which tended, for a time, to

efface the favourable impressions, that had been previously made, by the approach of the commissioners being announced, the extent or nature of whose powers was not yet generally known, and that in fact this circumstance irritated some who had been heretofore well disposed. That, generally, all who had been disaffected to independence, either among the English or Germans, countenanced the disorders, and were opposed to the restoration of order; that among those, strangers were known to be entertained, who were supposed to be emissaries from places at a distance. That though the spirit of disorder spread like an epidemic from place to place, yet at every attempt to restore order, some progress had been made, and many induced to forsake the cause of opposition; that after the Redstone meeting, few, if any citizens, otherwise sensible and discreet, adhered to the insurgents; that in consequence of this, those who continued obstinate became the more desperate in proportion to the smallness of the number of men of discretion and property that countenanced them, and as their last hopes of success in their opposition depended on their preventing the success of the meetings for giving assurances on the 11th of September, the agents of Tom the Tinker made their last effort to defeat the salutary intentions of these township meetings, yet with all their industry, it was but in comparatively few places that they had any success, or produced any disturbance.

We assured him that the greatest cause of so small a number signing the declaration of submission, was the reluctance of the innocent to give such assurances as might imply an acknowledgment of guilt, have the

appearance of giving a new test not required by law; or (as they thought the words indirectly meant) prevent them from petitioning for a repeal or revision of the excise law. That it was this principle that influenced the whole county of Fayette, the greater extent of Westmoreland, and the frontier parts of the other counties, to withhold their signatures from these assurances prescribed by the commissioners.

We stated that from the meeting at Redstone, but especially from a view of the characters who in some places opposed the giving assurances to government, the well disposed people had become convinced that it was their duty to stand forth with greater vigour in support of the laws; that they, having come to know; and have confidence in, each other, had very generally entered into associations to support the laws, and that these associations in favour of government were generally entered into within a few days after the 11th of September, and had every appearance of being so successful, that the people, who had been the most troublesome, solicited permission to sign the associations as a matter of favour, and that since that time there had neither been disturbances nor threats.

We also stated, that on the whole a much greater proportion of useful information had been disseminated among the people, respecting their political duties and interests than formerly, that the number of those who had qualified themselves for giving information, and who were industrious in instructing their neighbours, were greatly increased in the country, and that many of the clergy were particularly useful in this way, and had been industrious in promoting submission to the

laws, that the insolence of the most ignorant and turbulent persons had fully convinced all men of discretion and interest in the country, that if they permitted government to be violently opposed, even in the execution of an obnoxious law, the same spirit would naturally lead to the destruction of all security and order; they saw by experience that in a state of anarchy the name of liberty would be profaned to sanction the most despotic tyranny, that for some time after the commencement of the insurrection, the extreme agitation of mind that prevailed operated as a repulsive principle against receiving information, but that, that temper having subsided, there was now a solicitude to be informed, and that in fact many who had been active in some of the disorders, being since convinced of their folly, were now among the firmest friends of order, and active in promoting that disposition among their neighbours! This circumstance, together with the leaders having generally signed the amnesty, and left the more ignorant and obstinate to shift for themselves, we said would for the future destroy all confidence among those who might be disposed to commit disorders; that added to this the general conviction now prevailing among all men of property and discretion, that it is their interest as well as duty to preserve order, afforded the strongest ground of rational confidence, that in future the laws would be obeyed and the officers protected.

With respect to atonements, we suggested, that if the army marched into the country in order to procure them, the most proper objects having already sheltered themselves under the faith of government, those who



were guilty and had not signed the amnesty would have time to escape while the army was advancing. We proposed to carry up with us in confidence such instructions as the President would transmit to any person, whom he would appoint to commence prosecutions, and alleged that in that way alone proper subjects for making atonement could be procured, and that doing this, would afford a decisive test whether the execution of the laws could be supported or not. We concluded by requesting the President to inform us if time would be yet allowed to procure more certain and unequivocal assurances, and if this was granted, in what manner these assurances should be obtained, and how, or where, they should be communicated to him.

The President, in reply, assured us that it would have been his wish to have authorized the commissioners to have given the people sufficient time for the agitation to subside, and to be informed of the terms and to deliberate on them, without ordering the militia to be in readiness for marching, if time and other circumstances would have permitted, but that the time the insurrection commenced was not of his choosing, and was too near the winter to enable him to afford the time he wished to have given, and that the flame having caught in Maryland, and symptoms of it having been discovered in some other places in Pennsylvania, rendered it improper to delay the expedition till the spring, lest the flame should spread further.

He said there were some disorderly corps in the army, that some disorders had been committed on the march to Carlisle, and that two men had been actually killed, he described, circumstantially, the manner in

which they were killed, and said that though from the information he had received neither case appeared to have been murder, yet he had given up the authors of both these offences, to the laws of our own state, and would do so in every instance, where the laws required that this should be done, and he assured us that he would provide by dispersing the disorderly corps among better troops, or otherwise, that they should be kept in strict subordination, that in every instance, where infractions were made on the laws by any of the army, they should be subjected to punishment. He assured us further, that the army should not consider themselves as judges or executioners of the laws, but as employed to support the proper authorities in the execution of them. That he had been obliged to leave Virginia, before he transacted some necessary business, which he had intended, and to come in haste to Philadelphia on account of the insurrection, and that he had left Philadelphia, where we knew his presence was necessary to prepare for the meeting of Congress, in order to come to the army; that he mixed and conversed daily with the officers, and that his great object in all this was to impress the army with a proper sense of the importance of submitting to the laws, and that unless they did so, the last resort of a republican government would be defeated. He added that he would go to the Maryland Brigade, then rendezvoused at Williams-port, and from thence to the Virginia troops at fort Cumberland, and return by Bedford, where the troops now on their march from Carlisle would encamp for some time, and that his great object would be to impress on

the army, in these different places, a sense of the necessity of its subordination to the laws.

With respect to the expence, &c. of the expedition, he said there might some good grow out of it to console, if not compensate us. That though we had made a republican form of government and enacted laws under it, yet we had given no testimony to the world of being able, or willing to support our government and laws, that this being the first instance of the kind since the commencement of the government, he thought it his duty to bring out such a force as would not only be sufficient to subdue the insurgents, if they made resistance, but to crush to atoms any opposition that might rise in any other corner; that this would operate in favour of humanity, by effectually discouraging any, that might be otherwise so disposed, from provoking bloodshed; and that in the result it might teach the citizens to be more cautious of writing or speaking in such a manner of the measures of government, as might have a tendency to inflame the citizens, and would also convince other nations that we could defend ourselves. He said that the questions we had asked, respecting further assurances, would require some time for consideration, and appointed us to wait on him again at five o'clock in the evening.

In the evening interview, the President declined sending forward with us or others, orders for securing offenders. This we expected. He told us that we ought to know among ourselves who were guilty, and prosecute them. He encouraged us to take more unequivocal assurances from the people, but made no promise of amnesty on the account of these assurances, but

repeatedly said that they might do good, and could do no harm, and he on this and every other occasion pressed it on us to take the utmost care that one gun should not be fired, and added that if one gun was fired, he would not be responsible for the consequences; we assured him that there was no design of making resistance, but on the caution being repeated, we remarked that if a fool or desperate man, to prevent himself from being taken, should fire a gun, that it would be a great hardship if the whole country should be implicated in his guilt; he answered that he did not intend that they should, but that we did not know what might be the consequence of firing one gun. He told us that he did not command the army, in person, but had appointed governor Lee commander in chief, and mentioned who were to command the militia of the different states, and directed the orders he had prepared, to be read to us, as far as they respected the subordination of the army to the laws.

We had free access to converse on every topic that we thought might be useful, as long as we judged it convenient to stay, and in the course of the conversation secretary Hamilton, who was present and took a part in the general conversation, asked us what were the grounds of our own confidence of submission to the laws, and the protection to be afforded to officers in the different parts of the country.

In answer to this we related the particular instances of coercion that had recently been given in the different counties, which discovered that there was both a disposition and ability to put the laws in execution in all the four counties. We mentioned as another ground of

our confidence, the industry of the clergy in promoting submission to the laws, and stated several instances of it, such as Mr M<sup>r</sup> Millin of Washington county refusing to administer the sacrament of the lord's-supper to his congregation, until they would submit to the laws, and Mr. Porter of Westmoreland, who laboured publicly and privately with success from the beginning, to prevent the spirit of disorder from spreading in his congregation ; that many other clergymen had distinguished themselves, and, that as soon as the agitation of mind had subsided which in some places rendered men deaf to instruction for a time, they had great influence with the people in bringing them to a sense of their duty. We also stated that all the judges of the court in the different counties, without exception, the justices of the peace, and all who ever had been, or then were, Members of Assembly, with a few exceptions, chiefly in one county, were, and always had been well disposed, and that in general all who had been distinguished for understanding, to whom their neighbours in settled times had looked up to for counsel, were the friends of order.

We observed that during the agitation a remarkable change appeared to have taken place in society, that an unusual number of falsehoods, asserting that a vast variety of unusual and oppressive taxes had been laid by Congress, that the wages of the members had been raised to eight dollars a day, &c. and that in consequence of these reports, men who held offices either in the Federal or state governments, were considered as combined against the people, and discredited in contradicting those reports, while at the same time every traveller or vagrant was credi-

ted in asserting them, but that now, people having been generally undeceived, would never suffer themselves to be so misled for the future by crediting such stories.

On being asked by the secretary, what ground of confidence we had with respect to the country adjacent to the Monongahela, we answered that not having been present at the last meeting at Parkison's Ferry we had not personal knowledge respecting that country, but that Alexander Addison, President of the state courts in that district, who had been secretary of the meeting at Parkison's Ferry, had informed us by letter, that he had conversed with the principal distillers who resided there, and that they had assured him that they would all submit to the law. We added that Mr. Andrew M<sup>r</sup>. Farlane, who resided in the settlement, where the opposition had been the most violent, and who had himself been obnoxious to the rioters, had travelled down the road with us, and assured us, that he would be responsible with all his estate, which was considerable, for submission to the law, and protection to the officers in that settlement; and that he would even permit the office to be held in his own house, and be responsible for its safety; that on asking him if he would permit an office to be kept in his house, supposing the officer to be very unpopular, he replied, that if that should be the case, it might be more prudent for the officer to hold it for some time in Pittsburgh; where the gar- rison was; but that a person who was not otherwise obnoxious would be in no danger from holding the office. Mr. M<sup>r</sup>. Farlane's house is in Allegany county, but part of his land is in Washington\*.

\* See Note A. end of v. lume.

We acknowledged that a number were backward to believe that the militia would march out against them; but that this was occasioned by the reports they heard almost every day, of liberty poles being erected in the old counties, of the militia refusing to turn out, or determining to join the Insurgents, when they did come; that hearing of the threats of violence that had been uttered by some, and greatly magnified by report, deterred waggoners and other travellers from telling the truth, unless they were certain of the company they were in; but that this deception no longer existed, and had generally prevailed only with a very ignorant set of people who were almost the only ungovernable persons, that we had any trouble with towards the last. That the agitation of mind, anxiety, and apprehensions of danger, false alarms and suspicions, which perplexed society for a few weeks, had rendered the citizens generally extremely desirous of having order restored; and that before it had been so far accomplished, every man of influence and understanding was fully convinced that it was for their own interest to have the laws supported, and officers protected, in the discharge of their duty. The state officers themselves conceiving that the transition, from suppressing excisemen to that of insulting judges and other state officers, was very easy, felt themselves particularly interested in restoring order, and then we observed that from this general apprehension of danger and anxiety for order, there arose a greater security to government, than the most solemn declarations could possibly have otherwise given.

We suggested that the assurances which might be procured by the march of the army, and making severe examples by way of atonement, might not be unequivocal, that it might possibly rather increase animosity and change the direction of resentment from public outrages to private revenge, which was the more dangerous, as it would be more difficult to guard against it.

The President had informed us, that it was the opinion of a number of the most respectable of our own citizens, that the march of the army would be necessary, not only for the restoring submission to the revenue laws, but for the protection of well disposed citizens. We acknowledged that appearances about the time that the commissioners went away, and at some places on the day of signing the declaration, were such as to justify that opinion, but assured him that from the change of temper, which had been evidenced, some of the best informed of those who gave that opinion had changed their sentiments, that probably all had, that though some citizens had received insults, yet they did not wish for an army to revenge their cause; that the courts having been held through the whole circuit without insult or opposition, there was no room to doubt but they were fully competent to the protection of the citizens.

We enquired whether advantage would be taken of want of form in signing the declaration? The President said he could not inform us unless he knew the circumstances. We explained to him, that we meant only such want of form as did not arise from any fault in the person claiming the amnesty, but from the con-



duct of others, such as the papers being torn by a desperate banditti after they had been signed; to this it was replied, that no advantage should be taken of want of mere matter of form.

At this and all the other interviews, the President authorized us to assure the citizens who had sheltered themselves under the faith of government, that one hair of their head should not be injured, let their crimes have been ever so great.

We undertook to procure more general and unequivocal assurances, and to transmit them to the army, and were assured that the army would halt some time at Bedford, so as to give an opportunity of procuring the assurances, and that they would be well received. We then withdrew with a view of returning homewards next morning, but the President sent his private secretary early next morning to our lodging, to ask us to wait on him again before we left town, but having rode out a few miles to see relations, the President was gone out to the army before we returned; but as he returned from seeing the last division of the army begin their march, he stopped his horse before the door of our lodging, and calling us to him, conversed some time with us in the street, and appointed us to wait on him again in the evening, and to bring some assurances which we had informed him we had with us, that had been subscribed after the 11th of September. We spent that evening conversing in the same manner, as we had done the former, and chiefly on the same subjects, till we thought it convenient to retire. We were dismissed as politely as we had been received, and in all the opportunities we had of conversing with

the President, we were treated with that candour and politeness which have at all times distinguished his character.

At parting, both on this and a former interview, we expressed a wish that the President could accompany the army to its farthest destination, and acknowledged that he had given every possible assurance of the army being kept in subordination, short of what his own presence and authority along with it would produce. He replied on this occasion, that if when at Bedford he discovered that his presence would be necessary, and he was not under the necessity of returning to Philadelphia, he possibly would stay with the army, if it advanced into the western country.

I do not pretend that we were treated with attention, from any peculiar attachment to us, whether that was so or not is a matter of no importance in this case. The attention however that he paid to us was the result of sound discretion. He was anxious to prevent bloodshed, and at the same time to enforce due submission to the laws, with as little trouble as possible, and by encouraging us to procure more explicit assurances, he was accomplishing a principal object of the expedition, before the army arrived. And in fact, such explicit assurances were procured before they arrived, that nothing remained to be done by them but to support the civil magistrate in procuring proper subjects to atone for the outrages that had been committed.

The President was very sensible of the inflammatory and ungovernable disposition that had discovered itself in the army before he arrived at Carlisle, and he had not only laboured incessantly to remove that spirit and

prevent its effects, but he was solicitous also to remove our fears. As often as we suggested apprehensions of danger from that quarter, he consoled us with assurances of good discipline and subordination to the laws being enforced, and of the disorderly corps being dispersed among such as were more orderly, or if that would not do, that they should be discharged with infamy. Orders were actually given to this effect, and at least in some instances punctually executed.

The President's attention to promote subordination to the laws, and curb the disposition to licentiousness, which was too evident, and to give us sufficient confidence to encourage the people in the western country, was sound policy ; for though nothing could be conceived more distressing to us than the very thoughts of hostile opposition to the authority of the United States, and though it was well known that we had made every exertion in our power to prevent it, yet if the army had marched to the western country under the prevailing influence of that inflammatory and licentious spirit, which discovered itself among a part of them for some time at Carlisle, we must have thought it our duty to have returned with all haste, and told the people what they had a right to expect ; and in that case desperation must have supplied the want of resources, and the innocent must have made a common cause with the guilty ; for there is no law, divine or human, to oblige people tamely to submit to be skewered, hanged or shot, in cold blood, and this was for some time the declared object of such as made most noise, and even of some who laid claim to the character of gentlemen ; and it was a singular circumstance, that

such citizens of the western country, as had made the greatest exertions in preventing the spread of the disorders, and restoring submission to the laws, were destined to be the first victims of this lawless rage.

The President was happily successful in reducing the licentious part of the army to subordination to the laws, and in inspiring the people in the western countries with such a measure of confidence, as prevented any conduct on their part, that could give the army any just cause of irritation.

Information that there were many officers of discretion and experience in the army, as well as a great many orderly citizens, who come out in their proper classes, on militia duty, had also a tendency to abate the fears of the people of the western countries.



## C H A P. XV.

**M**R. Redick and I, returning with all convenient speed, separated at Greensburgh in Westmoreland county, after preparing an advertisement to be published in the Pittsburgh gazette, calling for a meeting of the delegates of townships, which had been elected for the first meeting at Parkison's ferry, and requesting also the attendance of as many discreet citizens besides, as could conveniently attend. Knowing that the gazette would be put to press before the advertisement could reach the editor, we were obliged to make it too short for conveying such information as we wished to communicate; conceiving also that the gazette was too slow a method of warning the citizens in the four counties, I undertook to give information by circular letters to the counties of Westmoreland and Fayette, and with the assistance afforded by others, these letters were sent to proper persons without delay. The extent of the country over which the people were spread,

and the importance of having the general sense of the country unequivocally understood at the meeting, induced us to delay it some days longer than we had contemplated at Carlisle, rather than that the assurances to be obtained should be doubtful. This, however, rendered it impossible to have the assurances forwarded to Bedford before the army had left it. The President had found it necessary to return to Philadelphia, some days before the army left Bedford.

An excellent opportunity offered for taking the sense of the citizens, at the regimental musters, which happened on the week previous to the meeting. In Westmoreland and Fayette counties, the brigadier-generals and inspectors of both counties, without mutual consultation, proposed to those who attended the musters, that they should sign assurances engaging themselves, personally, to submit to the laws, protect the officers, &c. and before the end of the week, on which the musters were held, all the citizens of those two counties, whose names were in the muster rolls, and could attend, had signed explicit assurances. A number of them had done so before, on the day appointed by the commissioners, or within a few days after it.

Mr. Redick having to go by Pittsburgh with the advertisement; it was two days after the letters had been circulated in the other counties, before he arrived at Washington town, so that he had not so early an opportunity of communicating information as I had, and the news-paper circulating slowly, the people south of the Monongahela not having encouragement for giving new assurances, neglected the opportunity of the musters,

though many of them had signed in their respective townships before the Parkison ferry meeting.

On the 24th of October, the meeting convened; great indeed was the difference between the complexion of this meeting, and that which met at the same place on the 14th of August preceding, and this difference was in a great measure owing to a few men. Bradford, Fulton, Parkison, Marshall, and others, who had contrived and promoted the meeting at Braddock's field, had either secured an amnesty by submitting in due time, or fled out of the country, and others who, perhaps, had done neither, were ashamed to appear at this meeting, though the terror of them and their friends had overawed the first; and a great number of respectable citizens attended at this meeting, who did not think it prudent to countenance the first. The citizens did not act here as delegates, nor produce credentials, and the greatest harmony and good order prevailed. James Edgar was appointed chairman, and Albert Gallatin secretary.

When the meeting was opened Mr. Redick and I gave an account of the discharge of our trust at Carlisle, and stated the propriety of giving more unequivocal assurances than had yet been obtained, and the encouragements given for doing so, as nearly in the President's own words as we could express them. We also stated the importance of preventing any headstrong foolish people from irritating the army, if it advanced into the country, either by firing a gun at them, or any other conduct that might be construed into a pretence by any in the army to break through the rules of discipline, &c. and in order to render them the more cautious, we

## INSURRECTION. 193

Informed them that the same inflammatory spirit appeared to pervade some part of the army, that had so recently prevailed in this country. We also, according to the President's instructions, assured those who had sheltered themselves under the faith of government, that they would not be disturbed, let their crimes be what they might, and that no advantage should be taken of want of mere matter of form. We added such other information, and made such observations, as we thought suitable to the occasion; but many observations were not necessary, the people were willing to do every thing that was judged proper, indeed if the same people had attended and voted at the first meeting that did at this, and if those who governed the passions of that day, and were absent from this meeting, had also been absent from that, an army would not have been marched into the country. At this meeting, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

1st. Resolved, that in our opinion, the civil authority is now fully competent to enforce the laws and to punish both past and future offences, inasmuch, as the people at large are determined to support every description of civil officers in the legal discharge of their duty.

2d. Resolved, that in our opinion, that all persons who may be charged or suspected of having committed any offence against the United States or the state, during the late disturbances, and who have not entitled themselves to the benefits of the act of oblivion, ought immediately to surrender themselves to the civil authority, in order to stand their trial, that if there be any such persons among us, they are ready to surrender.



themselves to the civil authority accordingly, and that we will unite in giving our assistance to bring to justice such offenders as shall not surrender.

3d. Resolved, that in our opinion, offices of inspection may be immediately opened in the respective counties of this survey, without any danger of violence being offered to any of the officers, and that the distillers are willing and ready to enter their stills.

4th. That William Findley, David Redick, Ephraim Douglass, and Thomas Morton, do wait on the President with the forgoing resolutions.

That these resolutions were unequivocal was not only testified by the unanimity of the vote, but by the papers that had been signed by the people at the musters, and otherwise. The citizens south of Monongahela, who had not had the opportunity of signing at the musters, expressed great regret that they had not known in time that such a measure would have been acceptable, and assured the meeting, that those who had not yet signed assurances would do it without delay. Assurances signed by a number of them, a few days after that appointed by the commissioners, had been presented to the President at Carlisle.

The four commissioners appointed to carry the assurances to the President, could not do it without some delay, as they resided in the four different counties, and when they met together at Greensburgh, they were informed that the President had returned to Philadelphia, and that the army was on its march from Bedford and fort Cumberland to the Western counties; we therefore concluded to halt, till the army would advance, and to present the assurances to the comman-

der in chief, but as secretary Hamilton was with the left wing of the army, and as we believed that he would influence whatever measures might be adopted in consequence of the assurances we had to present, we waited some days for his arrival at Bonnet's camp, in the southern extremity of Westmoreland county, and presented them first to him, who when he had examined them, returned them to us, after telling us, that for the sake of decorum, it would be best to present them to the commander in chief. This was what we intended to have done.

The next day we arrived at Union town, in Fayette county, where the head quarters then were, and presented the assurances to the commander in chief, who sent for the other general officers, and he and they treated us with civility. The commander appointed us to wait on him the next morning. Secretary Hamilton arrived at Union town the same evening, and the main body of the left wing of the army arrived at Union Town, the same day,

The next morning, some hours later than the time appointed, the commander in chief presented us with an address to the people, in answer to their assurances.

We had, in conversation with him on the preceding evening, stated substantially, though much more concisely, the same reasons, for our confidence that the people would submit to the laws and protect the officers, as we had done to the President, with this difference however, that being better informed, our confidence was more perfect. We admitted indeed, that it was true, that some of the ignorant people in some

places believed the falsehoods that had been propagated, and did not believe that the army was approaching, until they were on their march. One of our number admitted, that some young headstrong boys, who had got arms in their hands, were not willing to give assurances of submission, until they were convinced that the army was approaching, and that with them these fears might have been a prevailing motive to submission, but we denied that this was the general principle of submission, and assured him that the submission had been very general before it was known that the army would march, that it was from a conviction of this, that men of the best discernment, who had an opportunity of learning the sentiments, and observing the temper of the people, at the courts which had been held in all the counties, called the meeting at Parkison's ferry, who adopted the resolutions of submission that had been transmitted to the President at Carlisle. That this conviction was obtained, and a call of the Parkison meeting delegates agreed on, as early as the report of the commissioners to the President, on which the orders to march were founded, was made. That this change of temper was founded on a general conviction, that it was their own interest to have the laws supported, and was promoted by the industry of those citizens who had been always well disposed, but who had lay by during the height of the disturbances, till they were convinced of the necessity of standing forward for the restoration of order, and entertained hopes that reason and argument would be attended to. We assured him also that those who had taken a lead in disturbances, had either submitted in time to secure themselves

under the amnesty, or were fled, and that consequently the ignorant and obstinate, who had opposed submission to the last, finding themselves forsaken by all in whom they had confidence, would have no encouragement to be troublesome for the future, and that their confidence in each other would be so destroyed as to leave no ground for suspecting their being able to form any new dangerous combinations. Notwithstanding that we assigned these and other such reasons as grounds of confidence in the reality of the people's submission, the commander in chief in his address to the inhabitants of that country through us, did not acknowledge that we had assigned any other reason, but the panic occasioned by the advance of the army. When we objected to this statement, and alleged that we had candidly given other and more substantial reasons, and that this reason would apply to only a few of the most ignorant and obstinate, he struck out the words which fixed this charge on all the people, and interlined, *the lower order of the people*, words which we had never spoken; for though we mentioned a difference of character, we had not thought of a distinction of orders in society. We have few slaves and no nobles.

Near the conclusion of the address, he recommends it to those societies, who had poisoned the minds of the people with falsehoods, to continue with their usual formalities, to counteract the falsehoods they had circulated, and that thereby, they would make some atonements for the mischief they had done; we returned it to him again, and requested to know to what meetings he alluded. He answered, that it was the Par-

kison meetings, and such as them. We replied, that the Parkison meetings and others of that kind, were held for the express purpose of restoring order, that the first Parkison meeting, in a great measure put a stop to the outrages, and that the subsequent meetings, had completed the restoration of submission to the laws, but he seemed not to understand the distinction between those and other meetings. The denunciation of self created societies however, that soon followed, indicated that his advisers had other meetings in view. Indeed from his understanding so little of the subject of his own address, and discovering so little candour in it, we suspected, at the time, that it did not originate with himself. When we withdrew, it was proposed to accompany the publication of it in the newspapers with remarks, containing a candid statement of the reasons we had assigned for the confidence that might be placed in the assurances of submission, which we had presented ; but on conferring together, we agreed rather to submit to an uncandid statement of our own conduct, which was evidently calculated to give the best disposed people in the country just cause of offence against us, than to do any thing that might give the army a pretence for irritation, we plainly discovered that the address was calculated to give a bad impression of us to the people, and of the people to the army, and the world. It was also calculated to afford reasons for continuing the army longer in the country, and convinced us that those, who then gave the supreme direction to the proceedings, did not design to pay much respect to the unequivocal assurances, which the President seemed solicitous that we should

procure. Indeed though we were treated politely in other respects, and employed to assist in fixing the prices of necessaries for the army, and consulted about the ground on which it should encamp, when it advanced further into the country ; yet we did not meet with that candour and frankness, with which we had been treated by the President at Carlisle. On reading some of the preceding Chapters, it will occur to the reader that either governor Lee was not the author of the address he presented to us, or that he did not understand the subject, when he ascribed the circulating of falsehoods, to poison the minds of the people, to the meetings held at Parkifon's Ferry.

## C H A P. XVI.

**T**HE first orders, that appear to have been executed under the authority of the federal judge, were at Bedford, from whence the four men mentioned already were escorted to Philadelphia under a military guard. As far as it was in the power of the parties employed to escort them, these prisoners were treated with propriety.

Some few were taken without legal orders, when the army entered the western counties, but were soon dismissed. One of these had signed assurances in due time; but no general attempt was made to take prisoners, until the army had encamped a considerable time in the vicinity of Monongahela, and were apparently preparing to return home; arrangements were then made to have the prisoners taken in all the different parts of the country, on the 13th of November. For

this purpose, different detachments were destined to various routs, who in most instances secured those that they had orders to apprehend. The orders were executed with promptitude and address, but not with equal humanity by all the parties.

To drag men unexpectedly and unprepared, from their wives and children, from bed time till morning, is an exertion that shocks humanity, and yet in some imperious cases the interests of humanity require that it should be done. When it becomes expedient to make prisoners of bold and intrepid men, accustomed to danger, it is necessary, in order to prevent bloodshed, to take them by surprise; nor is this the less expedient when they happen to be innocent, for in that case, they might be disposed to make the more desperate defence; and every thing that would lead to a contest, was to be avoided on this occasion with peculiar care, as it was apprehended that some inflammatory spirits in the army wished for a plausible pretext to burst the bonds of discipline, and satiate their vengeance on a defenceless country.

Though it appeared, in the result, that but a small proportion of those that were taken in this manner had done any thing for which they could be punished, yet those who were employed to take them, had no right to examine, or discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. But though the rigid duty must be performed, no man of honour or humanity would add insult or cruelty to unavoidable severity. I rejoice at having it in my power to state that, in most instances, care was taken to employ men of character and discretion in taking prisoners.



Captain Dunlap of Philadelphia, and his company, were sent to Muddy creek in the upper end of Washington county, they took colonel Crawford and son, Mr. Sedgwick, a justice of the peace, Mr. Corbly, a clergyman of the Baptist persuasion, and others. They were taken early in the morning, and had no opportunity of making resistance. Captain Dunlap and his party, while they behaved with the greatest dexterity in taking the prisoners, treated them with as much politeness and attention as their situation would admit of, and engaged their gratitude by accompanying unavoidable severity with humanity.

These prisoners assert, that they had not the opportunity of signing the terms of the commissioners until the appointed day was past. They were admitted to bail, after several months imprisonment, and though two of those persons were reported to have been a good deal inflammatory, there was no bill found against any of them on their trial. They were not engaged in the outrages against excise officers, or at the rendezvous at Braddock's field. I cannot find that Sedgwick, the justice of the peace, had done any thing to lay a foundation even for suspicion. Crawford, the younger, had been one of the armed party, who appeared at the Redstone meeting with a design to punish Jackson, but he was dismissed at Pittsburgh.

General Irwin had been ordered to march to the neighbourhood of Pittsburgh with a division of the army, and was directed to take a number of the citizens of Pittsburgh prisoners on the same night on which the general seizure was made. It appears that two

lists were designed for him, but one \* only was delivered, without any distinction made in it between criminals and witnesses, or any discretionary power of discrimination intrusted to him. The list contained the names of eighteen citizens of Pittsburgh, of whom one person, on receiving some private hint of the design, delivered himself up to the judiciary, then sitting in his own house. The general, it has been said, was instructed to strike two other persons out of the list,

Thus, agreeably to orders, a number of citizens were dragged out of their beds in the night, and marched to the camp, with scarce sufficient time to put on their necessary cloathing. The camp affording no better accomodations, they were obliged to lay that night on the wet earth, under snow and rain, and to add to their misery they complain that they were barbarously insulted by some of those, by whom they were taken, and also by some of the guards in the camp. Next day they were empounded in a waste house, where they were detained for several days; no better lodging could be procured in the camp. Whatever insults, they may have received, were contrary to the orders of the general.

On the representation of general Irwin, they were removed from the camp to the garrison, and put under the direction of colonel Butler; they were then confined in a new house, without fire, for five days more. So many prisoners, from various parts, were then con-

\* This list is published at length in Mr. Brackenridge's incidents; but general Irwin does not know how it was procured, and says, that he had no means of distinguishing between criminals and witnesses.

finer in Pittsburgh, that proper accommodations could not be procured.

When the time arrived, that they were to appear before the judiciary, though the prisoners were in the custody of the officer of the garrison, general Irwin was called on, perhaps in compliment to his rank, to issue orders for releasing them individually from the garrison in course as they were demanded by the judiciary. It was by the call of the judiciary for their appearance, that he, to his surprise, first discovered that a number of those whom according to orders he had taken and treated as criminals, were only called on as witnesses; but how much greater must his surprise have been, if he had known that a number of them had signed the amnesty in due time, and consequently were so sheltered under the faith of government, that according to the President's declaration at Carlisle, they were not to have been disturbed, let their crimes have been ever so great.

I confess, when in Philadelphia, I found some in the prison who had signed the amnesty, and was informed of the treatment others received on this occasion at Pittsburgh, I regretted that I had been an instrument in encouraging those who had done so, to exercise unlimited confidence in the faith of government, and on that ground, I demanded the release of a prisoner of that description, from the attorney of the district and the attorney general, and he was admitted to bail, but had to appear at the court as a witness; an apprehension that something of this kind would happen, was one reason which induced me to suggest twice to the President at Carlisle the importance of his crossing the

mountains with the army, and I am still persuaded, that if he could have done so, such mistakes would not have been so numerous.

The agonizing distress of those citizens and their families, who were made the victims of, perhaps, private resentments, on this occasion, can be more easily conceived than expressed. The consternation of others, when they observed the innocent, those who had signed the amnesty, witnesses and criminals, treated with such undistinguishing severity, was inexpressible. They justly apprehended, that no man was safe, let his conduct have been ever so innocent, or his assurance of protection from government ever so great, if those who influenced the judiciary had enmity against them.

I have already stated that many of them had signed the amnesty, others had refused to sign from the pride of innocence, or an aversion to an implied acknowledgement of guilt. A number of them were men of unimpeachable behaviour through the whole period of the insurrection. Though there had been a good deal of heat and irritation among the most ignorant class of people at Pittsburgh, yet there was no higher crime committed, even by them, than erecting a liberty pole, but a proportion of the prisoners were not of that class, one of them was a respectable and well behaved magistrate of the Town.

A captain, with a detachment of the army who took a number of prisoners in the southern parts of Washington, is asserted to have driven the prisoners under his care, like cattle at a trot, through muddy roads, and through creeks up to their middle in water, and to have empounded them in a wet stable at night, and

otherwise to have maltreated and insulted them; though this fact has been confidently asserted, and never contradicted, yet not having vouchers for it before me, I shall pass it over without being more particular.

The greatest outrage, however, against humanity and decency was committed by general White in the Mingo-Creek settlement.

It is said that he had been solicitous to have the command of the New-Jersey militia on the western expedition, but that from an apprehension of the peculiarity of his temper rendering him unfit for such a trust, arrangements were made that prevented him from attaining that rank; but being determined to be employed in the expedition, and holding the rank of brigadier general in the militia, he marched to Carlisle with the light-horse volunteers and after a part of them were incorporated with the legion, he continued to command the Jersey light-horse until the return of the army; when governor Howell taking the horse, all but a very small corps, which he left with general White, he gladly accepted of the charge of taking down the prisoners, after that trust had been solicitiously declined by others. Governor Howell returned with the horse by the way of Northumberland, and behaved in such a manner as to do honour to himself, and the corps he commanded, both in the western country and on the return. Though there seemed to be a general conviction, that general White was not possessed of sufficient discretion to be intrusted with the delicate charge of arresting

prisoners, yet by some means, I never could learn, from any officer of whom I have had an opportunity of enquiring, how, he was intrusted to superintend the taking of prisoners in Mingo Creek settlement, on the 13th of November, before mentioned, which, from his conduct, more than that of any other officers in that country, was known by the name of the *dreadful night*. I shall state his conduct, on that occasion, nearly in the words, by which it is expressed in a voucher now before me.

On Thursday, the 13th November, there were about forty persons brought to Parkison's house by order of general White; he directed to put the damned rascals in the cellar, to tie them back to back, to make a fire for the guard, but to put the prisoners back to the farther end of the cellar, and to give them neither victuals nor drink. The cellar was wet and muddy, and the night cold; the cellar extended the whole length; under a large new log house, which was neither floored, nor the openings between the logs daubed. They were kept there until Saturday morning, and then marched to the town of Washington. On the march, one of the prisoners who was subject to convulsions, fell into a fit: but when some of the troop told general White of his situation, he ordered them to tie the damned rascal to a horse's tail, and drag him along with them, for he had only feigned having the fits. Some of his fellow prisoners, however, who had a horse, dismounted, and let the poor man ride: he had another fit before he reached Washington. This march was about twelve miles. The poor man, who had the fits,

had been in the American service, during almost the whole of the war with Great Britain.

Having heard much about this inhuman business, and having occasion last summer to go to Washington, I travelled that road for the first time that I had ever been in that settlement, and lodged a night at the place. The plantation is the property of Benjamin Parkison, but rented by him to a Mr. Stockdale, who keeps tavern at it, and who seems to be a decent man, and one against whom there was no charge. He not only confirmed what I have stated above, but added a variety of other particulars equally shocking. Stockdale was forbid on the peril of his life to administer any comfort to his neighbours, though they were perishing with cold and famishing with hunger. The general treated the prisoners, as they arrived, with the most insulting and abusive language, causing them all to be tied back to back, except one man, who held a respectable rank, and who however was said to be one of the most guilty in his custody. One of the nearest neighbours, who had a child at the point of dying, and observing that they were bringing in the whole neighbourhood prisoners, without regard to guilt or innocence, went and gave himself up to general White, expecting that as he was conscious there was no charge against him, he would be permitted to return to his family on giving bail, but he also was inhumanly thrown into the cellar, tied with the rest, and refused the privilege of seeing his dying child; nor was he permitted to attend its funeral, until after many entreaties he obtained that liberty, accompanied with the most horrid oaths and imprecations.

The most of these prisoners were found to be innocent men and were liberated. There were but, three sent to Philadelphia for trial ; one of them after having been dismissed at Pittsburgh, and perhaps having taken a hearty grog, through joy at regaining his liberty expressed himself unbecomingly to some of the light horse men. He was afterwards pursued near thirty miles, and taken to Philadelphia, but there was no cause of action found against him at the court. He had served with approbation in the army during the war ; his name was Samuel Noy.

Whether general White had a list given him by the judiciary or not, I have not been informed, but he certainly had no orders to torture them with hunger, cold, and insults. Capt. Dunlap had a discrimination made in his orders between witnesses and supposed criminals, and treated them all with humanity, and had them comfortably lodged, and provided with victuals and drink, previous to his taking refreshments himself. By the orders given to general Irwin, he was obliged to take and treat all as criminals, but he did not insult any of them himself, nor permit them to be insulted by others in his hearing, and he provided for them as well as the camp would permit, and that being a very uncomfortable situation, he had them removed from it as soon as he could. That they were innocent persons, had sheltered themselves under the faith of government, or were only called as witnesses, was not known to the general, till it was discovered in the result ; but general White was himself the leading or perhaps the only man ; of his corps, who insulted the prisoners with the most opprobrious language, and pu-



nished them in the most shocking manner, short of inflicting death. It is an approved maxim, that every man should be treated as innocent till found guilty. An adherence to that salutary maxim was never more necessary than on this occasion, for the presumption was that every man who was conscious of guilt had either signed the amnesty or fled, having had so favourable an opportunity to provide for their safety by flight, and in the issue it became evident that they had availed themselves of one or other of those modes of escape, with very few exceptions. This was in fact the case with most of those taken by general White, and of all that were taken by the different parties, on that *dreadful night*, as it is still called. Only eighteen were sent to Philadelphia, and none of these were convicted on trial. Two or three of them, however, might probably have been found guilty on a charge of misdemeanour, but the charge on which they were tried being *treason*, two witnesses were necessary to prove the same fact, and this requisition could not be complied with.

When the facts had been fully examined in the court, it was the opinion of some of the most able lawyers that there was no treason in the case. Though as it happened that they were not convicted, the charge of treason was most favourable to the prisoners that had been guilty of misdemeanours.

As the army returned through Westmoreland, two prisoners were taken in the southern extremity of that county, and one in the neighbouring parts of Fayette county. They were taken to Philadelphia, the last had been in Kentucky during the insurrection, and did not return till after the riots had ceased. Isaac Meason, a

judge of Fayette county, followed judge Peters near forty miles into Bedford county, and offered himself and judge Wells of Bedford county, both of them acknowledged friends of government, as bail for the prisoner, but was absolutely refused. As Mr. Meason knew that the prisoner was guilty of no crime, which evidently appeared to be the case by no bill being found against him on his trial, he and Mr. Wells complain of the judge for not admitting him to bail on their application. Judge Peters, being well known to be a man of feeling and humanity, his conduct in this and several other instances can only be accounted for from his apprehension, that it was necessary that a considerable number of prisoners should be brought down, in order to prevent the inflammatory part of the army from committing outrages at leaving the country. His mind was tortured at being obliged to bring down so many prisoners, and his peace was disturbed by being teased for dismissing such numbers of them.

One of the two prisoners taken from Westmoreland was found guilty of setting fire to the house of Wells, the collector, and condemned to be hanged; but was afterwards reprieved, and then pardoned by the President of the United States. He is a very ignorant man, said to be of an outrageous temper, and subject to occasional fits of insanity. The principal witness against him was a person, who is said to have been the principal leader in the riot, but he was pardoned by the commander in chief; the other was a young man, who had come lately from Maryland, and had no family or friends in the country. No bill was found against him on trial.

I have mentioned before, that four prisoners were sent from Bedford, as the army advanced; one of them, Herman Husbands, was a very old man, extensively known on account of some singularities in his character. After suffering four months imprisonment, no cause of action was found against him, but though he was liberated, with others by the court, his constitution had received such a shock that he died before he left the city. Another of them, Mr. Filson, who kept a large store thirty miles above Bedford, was refused to be admitted to bail, though this favour was warmly solicited by several reputable merchants in Philadelphia. The prosecution against him was conducted with unusual severity; being first acquitted on a charge of treason, he was tried for a misdemeanour, and in this the verdict also was, *not guilty*. He is now a member of assembly for Bedford county.

Of the two others taken near Bedford, one was an old inoffensive German, named Wisegarver; he was taken to Philadelphia, and after being imprisoned four months he was admitted to bail, and no bill was found against him at court. The other, whose name is Lucas, had been a sergeant in the army in the time of the war, and was well known at the time of the revolt of the Pennsylvania line; and though he was one of the leaders of that revolt, yet in that situation he rendered such essential services to the public as to have a special reward assigned to him. After near four months imprisonment, he was admitted to bail on the intercession of a general officer, who was well acquainted with his services. When he attended the court to stand his trial nothing was found against him. He

has a numerous family of small children, and like too many, who served in the late war, he is poor.

No crimes had been committed in Bedford county of a more outrageous nature, than erecting some liberty poles, except an attempt on Webster, collector of excise; this, however, being conducted with greater mildness than other instances of the kind, and he having provoked it by transgressing the law himself, no person was prosecuted for it. The greatest number of those concerned were from Westmoreland. Husbands and Filson had attended the first meeting at Parkison's ferry; as no riots had taken place in the settlement in which they lived, this was probably construed to indicate a bad design, but they did not propose any thing at the meeting that was offensive. Wifegarver and Lucas had only been present or assisted at erecting a liberty pole in the town of Bedford, with a mixed multitude of others. I have already mentioned the bad effect, which the erecting of liberty poles had in encouraging the insurgents, yet the act of erecting them was no further criminal, than the correspondent conduct expressed a seditious design.

A certain John Mitchel who, with the assistance of another person, had robbed the Pittsburgh mail, gave himself up to general Morgan, after the judiciary had left the country. This man's evident simplicity induced the general to wish him to escape, and to discredit his being the person; but Mitchel insisting that he was one of the persons who robbed the mail, the general, instead of confining him, gave him a pass to go to Philadelphia, thereby putting it in his power to reflect on his situation, and make his escape; but he

went to Philadelphia, surrendered himself to be committed, and being found guilty on his trial, he was condemned to be hanged. This result was unavoidable on the fact being established; but the President, with great propriety, first reprieved for a time, and then pardoned him.

Thus an opposition to an excise system, which began with only clandestine attacks on some of the officers, and which, by the timely attention of those intrusted with the execution of the law, might easily have been checked, the revenues secured, the peace of the country preserved, and the credit of a republican government saved, was, by inattention or design, treated with neglect, or tampered with in a manner, that was more censurable than neglect, until it produced such an effect on the folly and prejudices of the people in a small part of a district, or rather a small part of a county, as, aided by the distraction or wickedness of a few others, broke suddenly out into such alarming disorders as agitated the whole United States, and occasioned the levying and marching of one of the best provided, most formidable, and in some respects, the most respectable army that ever marched under the banners of the United States; and yet the whole of this stupendous scene was wound up, without any person being killed, except in the attack on the inspector's house at the commencement of the insurrection, and the two men who were, perhaps, too wantonly killed by some of the army, before there had been an opportunity of introducing discipline into it. Several, however, died by sickness, especially in the left wing of the army.

When the judiciary had finished the examinations, and made a selection of those who were to be sent to Philadelphia, the army returned with rapid marches to the different counties from whence they were draughted, or had turned out volunteers. The quickness of their march prevented even the most disorderly corps from injuring the settlements so much as was apprehended, though it is certain several families, near where they encamped, did sustain considerable damages, chiefly occasioned by the troops in the rear. Assurances were given by secretary Hamilton, that the damages should be paid on their presenting appraisements to Congress. The appraisements were made out, and given to the proper officers, but have not been presented to Congress, nor otherwise provided for.

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C H A P. XVII.

THE situation and circumstances were not convenient for deliberate and impartial examination. The multitude of informations, and declarations of assurances, necessary to be perused, and the panic and embarrassment of witnesses, who were interrogated in a manner at the point of the bayonet, many of whom were more guilty than those against whom they gave testimony, and the unavoidable confusions of a camp rendered it very difficult for the civil magistrate to conduct the business with precision. Such witnesses were inevitably influenced by a sense of their own danger, and the hopes of obtaining pardon from the commander in chief ; for the pardon from the commander was not irrevocably secured, before the expectant had given his testimony, and in some instances, fear was added to hope, to draw from the witnesses such testimony, as was thought best calculated to secure the object they had in view. Persons who had been ill-

treated by the insurgents, and who of course were too much under the influence of resentment to give impartial testimony, were also interrogated as witnesses. Their testimony was doubtless admissible in law, though not entitled to such credit, as if they had been disinterested. In consequence of those untoward circumstances, it happened that in many instances the testimony was inconsistent or directly contradictory. Where this was evidently the case, the judge set both aside.

After a full investigation of the whole business it appears that a very small proportion of those who had been guilty suffered imprisonment. Those who had been most influential in opposition to the laws, had either complied with the terms of the commissioners, or, had fled when they found the army was approaching. Indeed many had fled who were guilty of no crime, but were so ill informed as to apprehend that their declining to sign the declaration of assurances would be construed into one. No attempt having been made to arrest or disturb any person all the time the army lay in the country, till it was apparently preparing to return, and the few that had been apprehended being dismissed, emboldened some who had fled or concealed themselves to return, and appear in public again, no doubt concluding that the assurances they had signed after the day appointed by the commissioners had been accepted as evidence of their repentance. This circumstance put many in the way of being taken, who would have escaped if the orders had been issued soon after the arrival of the army, but with-



al, there was not a single person sent to Philadelphia, who had been an influential leader in any of the outrages; several however were in custody and dismissed, who are declared to have been much more guilty than most of those that were detained. I have already said that several were taken down prisoners who were innocent, and some of them meritorious. Some circumstances that influenced this irregular distribution of justice naturally arose from the situation of the business; others will be accounted for in the sequel.

The commander in chief was authorized to exonerate those who gave such evidences of their repentance as were satisfactory to himself, as well as those who had agreed to the terms proposed by the commissioners; consequently those who had the greatest address or the most influential friends would of course obtain an amnesty, whilst the bashful, the ignorant, and the friendless were necessarily left to be the subjects for atonement. In this case the intercession of the excise officers who were the parties injured could not fail of success; I wish I could say that their private resentments had not been influential also. These evils arose naturally out of the state of things. There are no complaints of governor Lee having been inexorable or inhumane, but he had no rule to direct his judgment as to the manifestations of repentance, but the representations of those in whom he had confidence, and those representations were often unavoidably influenced by favouritism or resentment.

Comparatively few indeed were transported to Philadelphia for trial, and it was a hardship that most

of these few were innocent, and that others were dismissed who had been more influential in the riots than any of those who were brought to trial. I do not complain that many guilty persons were pardoned, nor do I call in question their repentance. I believe there were few, if any, but what had given every evidence of repentance that was required before the army crossed the mountains, unless giving testimony liberally against others was sometimes considered as an evidence of repentance.

From these circumstances it is evident that the judge of the district had an arduous task to perform. The selection of proper characters for making atonement was rendered difficult by the exercise of the pardoning power of the commander, which in numerous instances interfered with the opinion of the judge. The commander not being bound by strict rules of law in the exercise of his discretion, and the judge, and attorney, conceiving that they were authorised only to act according to such rules, contributed to the result I have mentioned ; but there were other causes.

When so great a number of those who had been taken prisoners by the detachments were released, many of the army became clamorous against the judge, and complained of having marched so far, suffered so many hardships, and taken so many prisoners, and that after all, these prisoners were likely to be dismissed without atonements being made ; on the discovery of so much hot blood in the army, the judge became afraid that it might mutiny, and take indiscriminate vengeance on the country, and justly considered such an event to be the greatest of all possible evils, not only to the

western counties, but to the government of the United States. In this dilemma he thought it was advisable to take down a greater number of prisoners than he otherwise would, and consequently conceived himself under the necessity of taking some who were innocent, or at least such as against whom there were no strong presumptions of guilt, trusting that the necessity of the case would justify the measure. He also considered himself as justified in law in committing such as had been present at, or members of, such meetings, as might from any special circumstances be deemed treasonable or seditious, and this construction was given not only to the riotous assemblies which committed outrages, and such as erected liberty poles, but even to the Parkison's meetings, &c.; for though the intention of the great majority of those who were members of those meetings was to restore order, and though they had in every instance been considerably successful, and were in the issue completely so, yet the first appointment, as it grew out of the attack on the house of the Inspector, was considered as criminal, and such as were most influential in making that appointment had endeavoured at the first Parkison's meeting to promote measures for consolidating the opposition to government, supported by these reasons. The district attorney in the charge, which he exhibited at Philadelphia against the prisoners, exhibited the attendance on these meetings among the acts of treason which had been committed.

This charge of treason against the meetings at Parkison's, was possibly calculated to be an apology for having brought down prisoners, against whom no other

offence was alleged. It was acknowledged by the district judge and attorney, that a large proportion of those, who not only attended at these meetings, but even at the Braddock's field rendezvous, which undoubtedly assumed the appearances of an insurrection, were not only innocent, but meritorious persons; and that it was not the assisting at these meetings, but the conduct when there, that should determine the criminality of the prisoners. If, by attending those meetings, a person became involved in criminality; the most decisive and useful patriots in the western country would have been liable to prosecution, as well as the most outrageous, but this rule of conduct was only pursued to a small extent as to numbers, and perhaps would not have been pursued at all, but in complacence to the inflammatory part of the army.

I know this circumstance is denied by a number who were in the army, and had a good opportunity of being acquainted with its prevailing temper; but it is suggested by the judge, and it may be reasonably admitted that a few inflammatory characters teasing the magistrate, and not only discovering their own ungovernable temper, but asserting that this temper was general in the army, was fully sufficient to give ground for these apprehensions. I have had occasion several times to mention, that a few noisy and restless spirits have it in their power, on particular occasions, for a time, to fix the character of the whole mass of either an army or a country; and this was undoubtedly the case with the army on this occasion. The sentiments of those, who were virtuous enough not to attempt to influence the decisions of the magistrate, were not known, as they

made no noise, while the inflammatory few, not only were so impertinent, as indirectly to interfere with the decisions, but in some instances, with the examinations. There was but one general officer, who discovered a disposition to promote disorders, and his influence was small.

I have said that some were brought prisoners to Philadelphia, against whom there was no cause of action, and others, without having been examined. I have already assigned the reasons why some were brought who were innocent. That any were brought without examination arose in part from other causes. Owing to the hurry and confusion of the camp, the judge could not attend to the examination of them all himself; sometimes the secretary of the treasury examined, and decided himself; on other occasions, the prisoners were examined by the district attorney, or by some of the state judges. Thus through the multitude of examiners, some were committed without being examined at all. It has been also suggested that some persons were sent down in consequence of the predetermination of the secretary of the treasury; instances might be given if it was necessary, and some will be offered in the sequel.

## C H A P. XVIII.

P E R H A P S the most mysterious circumstance attending the western expedition, was the character sustained by the secretary of the treasury. Frequent enquiries have been made from me, and I have often enquired of others, what station he held, to which his responsibility was attached, but without any satisfactory answers. But as it was generally believed that he gave the supreme direction to the measures that were pursued, and as the praise of all that was laudable, and the blame of what was censurable, has been by a kind of tacit consent ascribed to him, it will, for want of better sources of information, be necessary to examine such instances of his paramount influence, in the previous plans and subsequent conduct of the expedition, as have transpired.

That he was the responsible head of the revenue department, and had the direction of the measures relative

to the execution of the excise law, is evident from the powers vested in him by law for that purpose. That he originated not only the excise system, and the other revenue laws, which were enacted by Congress, previous to the insurrection, and the arrangements for carrying them into execution, is evident from the journals of Congress; and his own reports to the House of Representatives. The manner in which the coercive part of the excise law was executed, or rather, in which the execution of it was neglected, and the influence which that neglect had in promoting the opposition to the law, which finally burst forth into an insurrection, has been stated in Chap. VI.

That a government could never be considered as established, till its power was put to the test by a trial of its military force, is a sentiment that has been often ascribed to him, and never that I heard of contradicted; and that in perfect correspondence with their principle, he even in the cabinet expressed his sorrow that the town of Pittsburgh had not been burned by those who rendezvoused at Braddock's field, that so a trial of the military force of the government might have been rendered the more necessary and justifiable, has been asserted by authority that cannot be reasonably doubted. This assertion, which leaves no doubt of the principle from which it proceeded, perfectly coincides with the manner in which the excise law was executed in the western counties, and fully accounts for not holding special sessions of the court nearer the places where the crimes were committed, after a law had been made for that purpose, and may also without any forced induction account for issuing the processes out

of the district court so early in the winter. When it was known that a law was about to be passed to vest the state courts with powers for that purpose, and also for delaying the execution of the process, till so long after the state courts were competent to decide on the case, and until the throng of harvest, which is confessedly the most inconvenient season in the year for farmers to attend at a distance of above 300 miles, and which, from other circumstances, was the most likely to excite resistance. It is worthy of remark that when the distillers of Fayette county, without delay, sent to enter their appearance at Philadelphia, the writs were found to be erroneous, and therefore null. What a pity it was, that this had not been discovered before they had been made the instrument of promoting an insurrection.

If all these circumstances happened through inattention, that inattention was highly culpable; if they were the result of cool design, the connection of all the parts of the plan, and its eventual success, while they afford a striking evidence of dexterity and address, represent the morality of the conductor in a very questionable point of view. The exertions made by some of his friends in the House of Representatives, about the same time, in the winter in which the irregular processes were issued, which in the following harvest produced the insurrection, to have a law passed for raising an army of 25,000 men, and the evident indignation with which that plan was rejected by a decided majority of the House, is well remembered. While this measure discovers a perfect correspondence with the general conduct which led to the insurrection,



the rejection of it gave a testimony that the Representatives would not employ an army without a sufficient cause. The burning of Pittsburgh, if it had happened, would have afforded an argument for such an army as had been urged the preceding winter.

That when the outrages against the excise officers came to a violent height, the secretary should report to the President on the subject, was to have been expected, and that, when this report was to be published in the newspapers, as an address to the citizens, to convince them of the necessity of turning out in support of the government and laws, that the facts should have been represented with pretty high colouring, was not at all surprising, but that that conduct which was lawful should have been represented as criminal, and that charges should have been insinuated against the whole people of the western counties which were not founded in fact, could not be justified on any honest principle. These remarks will be better understood when I come to examine some parts of the report itself.

How the important duties and legal arrangements of the treasury could admit of the head of the department to attend on the western expedition to its furthest destination, is no part of my enquiry. While the President was with the different wings of the army, the secretary accompanied him, and appeared to act as his official secretary. When I was at Carlisle, he took a part in the conversations between the President and the commissioners from the western counties, and behaved with propriety in them; he signed officially the President's instructions to the commander in chief of the army.

When the President returned to Philadelphia, the secretary of the treasury remained, and marched with the right wing of the army, and on the march, and at the different encampments, in the Western country, was extremely attentive to the wants of the army, and was looked up to by many in it, as something more than even the commander in chief. The superb *marque*, which he occupied, and which was by far more extensive and elegant than that of the commander in chief on that expedition, or as the officers say, in the war with Great Britain, contributed to draw the attention of the army and of the country people to him, as a man of more than common authority.

In what character he assumed this superior state and influence, or to what extent he carried his authority, I have not been informed. It is well known, however, that orders were sometimes issued by him, and that he considered no officer in the army, as beyond his controul, though much of this authority was probably exercised through the instrumentality of others; some pretty high instances of this were not concealed. It is well known, that by his own authority, he wrote a severe reprimand for supposed misconduct to the commander in chief of the right wing of the army, in consequence of which, that officer was treated in a manner not becoming his rank; but it is of no importance to trace the character he assumed, or the authority he exercised, in the army; for to him has been ascribed, by some in the army, the measure of discipline that was preserved in it, and the regularity of the supplies they received; though this was undoubtedly ascribing too much to him, as a num-

ber of valuable officers occupied the various stations in the army. There is no doubt, however, but his attention and industry, were of great service. It is the secretary's connection, however, with the judiciary, that is of the greatest importance to examine. In this he was generally taken, or perhaps mistaken to be, the principal director. To mention all the instances of the authority he exercised as a civil magistrate, would lead me beyond the intended compass of this work; a few instances, shall only be selected.

The commander in chief had his quarters for some time at the house of major Powers, between Youghiogany and Monongahela rivers, and the quarters of the judiciary were at the next plantation. Major Powers had not only behaved well through the whole of the troubles, but had been zealously employed in endeavouring to restore order from an early period, till it was finally established. He had been a member of several meetings for that purpose, and was one of the committee of twelve who settled the terms of amnesty with the commissioners at Pittsburgh, and took an active lead in his neighbourhood, in procuring a compliance with those terms, his services were acknowledged while head quarters were at his house, and he was paid a larger sum than he demanded for his trouble and expences.

After the judiciary and part of the army had gone to the town of Washington, major Powers was invited by a polite letter, to wait on the secretary at that place, which was above thirty miles distant. When he arrived the secretary examined him about the conduct of certain characters, with some of whom he was not

even acquainted, but particularly about the conduct of Mr. Gallatin, at the meeting at Parkison's ferry, &c. On major Powers not answering to his satisfaction, he complained of the difficulty of obtaining information, and advised major Powers to retire an hour, to refresh his memory, in order to be re-examined, and spoke to an officer present to conduct major Powers into another chamber; in all this, the secretary appeared to treat him politely, but he was not a little surprised when he found himself thrust into a room among other prisoners, and there confined, under the point of the bayonet. This he thought an odd situation for cool recollection, if he had needed any. At the time appointed he was taken again into the presence of the secretary, who asked him if he had recollected himself so far as to give more satisfactory information; on being answered that he had nothing further to recollect, having already related all he knew, the secretary then suddenly assuming all his terrors, told major Powers that he was surprised at him, that having the character of an honest man, he would not tell the truth, asserting, that he had already proofs sufficient of the truth of what he knew he could testify, if he would. After some further insulting language and threats, major Powers was committed close prisoner under a military guard; and though the most unexceptionable bail was offered for permission to go to his family, it was refused, and he was marched under a military guard to Pittsburgh, and there detained till the eighth day after he was taken into custody. The secretary being gone, the judge sent for major Powers, and when he was brought into his presence, invited

him politely to sit down, assuring him that he had no charge at all against him.

It will appear in various other instances, that it was usual with the secretary to assert to those whom he was examining, that he was possessed of sufficient proofs already of the facts to which he endeavoured to extort testimony. The spring following, major Powers was much disposed to bring an action against the late secretary, for the treatment he had received. He thought this necessary for the vindication of the government, as well as to obtain satisfaction to himself, but finding that he would be obliged to go to New-York to prosecute, on the advice of his friends he relinquished the design.

John Hamilton of Washington is high sheriff of that county, and colonel of a regiment of militia, in the Mingo-Creek settlement; though a number of this regiment were known to have had an active hand in the attack on the inspector's house, and were in fact considered as the greatest promoters of the insurrection, yet he not only kept himself free from those outrages, but endeavoured, as soon as he heard of the design, to prevent the rendezvous at Braddock's field. It was he who informed Bradford that the arms and ammunition in the garrison at Pittsburgh were designed for general Scot's expedition against the Indians, and with the assistance of some others persuaded him to countermand the orders, and procured his promise to prevent the march. (See Chap. VIII.)

When he could not prevent the march to Braddock's field, he put himself at the head of his regiment, and was very instrumental in preventing further out-

rages from being committed. At the court that was held for the county of Washington, a short time after the commissioners left the country, he proposed to take any twenty of the leading insurgents, and lodge them in the county jail, if writs were issued for that purpose, but it was not thought advisable to issue the writs, until it should be known what measures the commissioners would recommend to the President; and until the inflammation would be more effectually cooled down. The sheriff however, to give testimony that he could have accomplished what he proposed, executed every writ of *capias* that he had in his hands without difficulty. He attended all the meetings for restoring order with a view to prevent outrages. His being a friend to order, and living where he did, merited higher approbation, than if he had resided where the citizens generally were less disposed to riot.

Yet it has been asserted, that this man was by the pre-determination of the secretary of the treasury doomed to be sacrificed as an atonement; to justify this determination by motives of humanity, the secretary suggested that colonel Hamilton had no family to lament his loss; and as he understood he was a man of considerable influence in the country, he did not doubt but though it might be difficult to find proofs against him, he was as guilty as any of them.

Colonel Hamilton was informed by a friend of designs against him time enough to make his escape, but conscious of his innocence he preferred travelling above thirty miles to where the judiciary then was, and presenting himself to Judge Peters informed him that

he had heard there was a charge against him, and requested to have it examined. The judge said he was then too much engaged, but would call on him presently; that day, however, passed, till evening, when major Lenox, the marshal, in the most delicate manner he could, told him he must put him under guard, but afterwards dispensed with arresting him, and only took his promise that he would not depart till judge Peters would converse with him; but the next day the marshal informed him that he had special orders to put him under guard, which he did accordingly, though with evident regret. The sheriff here remarks that major Lenox treated him with as much friendship and politeness as the nature of the case could possibly admit, and let me add that that officer's politeness is generally well spoken of.

On the third day after he demanded an examination, and the second after he had been put under guard, he was sent back to Washington town, from whence he had come, in custody of a small party of horse. The judiciary having arrived at Washington, the sheriff applied to judge Peters again to have his case examined, who told him he would in half an hour, but on the ninth day after he first applied to the judge, he was sent close prisoner to Pittsburgh, and from thence to Philadelphia, paraded through the streets with an ignominious badge in his hat, and thrown into the cells without his case having ever been examined. After an imprisonment of near two months and a half, he had his case brought before the supreme court on a writ of *habeas corpus*, and on examination nothing being found against him, he was admitted to bail. At

the circuit court, held in Philadelphia, in June following, a bill for misprison of treason was sent to the grand jury against him; but every witness that was sworn testified largely in his favour. There was not even a suspicious circumstance found against him.

Thus a man, who was at the time sheriff of the county, and a colonel of militia, and who, in a part of the country, and in circumstances where temporizing might have been excusable, was not only clear of any charge, but had merit; was selected by the secretary for a victim, and without being examined, illegally taken from the exercise of an office, at that time of importance to the peace of the country, and dragged down to Philadelphia in the winter, paraded in a barbarous manner through the streets, thrown for some time into the cells, and though, after a long confinement admitted to bail, yet obliged to attend again at Philadelphia to stand a trial apparently because the secretary of the treasury had determined on his destruction. It is probable, that it was only motives of humanity that operated to prevent major Powers from being also sent to Philadelphia, for he has a wife and family, and we are informed that the sheriff of Washington, having no family to lament after him, was assigned by the secretary as one reason why he was selected as an object of atonement.

It is not easy to assign probable reasons for selecting these two men as objects of vengeance. They had both been friends of order during the continuance of the disturbances, though they were naturally quiet, and never had distinguished themselves in political contests, nor taken any lead in the discussion of pub-



lic measures. Perhaps the principal motive for treating major Powers with such unjustifiable severity, was to extort testimony from him, and to teach others what they might expect, if they did not give such testimony against certain characters, as the secretary required. As colonel Hamilton was the sheriff of the county, and colonel of the battalion, where the insurrection originated, his rank and the relation he stood in to that county, were probably the reasons of his being selected.

My first personal acquaintance with either Powers or Hamilton, was at the meetings for restoring order, on which occasion their conduct was that of good citizens, and such as entitled them to my esteem. Hamilton was not a member of any of them, more than myself. I was much surprised, when I saw him in Philadelphia gaol, but especially when I found that he had been committed without charge or examination.

When he was admitted to bail, he told me he was about to put a statement of his case in the newspapers, but I advised him not to do it at that time, alleging that with the means that were used to procure testimony against him, it was probable, that some plausible charge might be produced on the trial, and that as some others were committed without examination, who were probably equally innocent, it was best to publish nothing till the final result of the trials would be known. This narrative is taken from colonel Hamilton's own statement of the case, and from my own knowledge.

I have stated, that undue influence was used to procure testimony against certain individuals, and given an

instance of it in the case of major Powers; I will add another instance in relation to sheriff Hamilton.

During the time sheriff Hamilton, was waiting to have his case examined, and before he was put into close confinement, a certain John Baldwin was under examination. He was interrogated alternately, by secretary Hamilton, judge Peters, the district attorney, the inspector, and Mr. Vaughan, a light horse man, from Philadelphia; the two last of whom treated him with the greatest indecorum. In the course of the examination, every means were used to induce him to testify against the sheriff. Baldwin had candidly informed them of himself being one of the committee at the burning of Nevil's house, and of the persons concerned in that riot, &c. and assured them that the sheriff was not concerned in the business. He was then urged to testify that the sheriff had notified his regiment, to assist at that riot, &c. and when he refused to give testimony to that purpose, because it was not true, he was insulted, and told that he equivocated, and evaded swearing the truth, and was assured that by his conduct, he had forfeited the benefit of the amnesty to which he was otherwise intitled, and also his life and property, in not testifying to what they demanded of him (and of which, he adds, he was conscious it was not true,) and told that he could only save himself by giving such testimony.

David Hamilton and others were treated in much the same manner, in order to extort testimony against sheriff Hamilton, and though no testimony could, even by these means, be extorted, yet this innocent man was subjected to the insults and sufferings already related.

I have been informed of various other cases, wherein improper methods were used, to influence witnesses, but as a recital of them would swell these sheets to an improper length, I shall decline mentioning them at present, and conclude this chapter with an extract from Mr. Brackenridge's Incidents, page 78.

"In collecting evidence against me, there was no pains spared.—In the examination of witnesses, when brought forward, there was no boot nor other instrument of torture in the hands of the examiners; but there was certainly every address to the fears of individuals, to extract from them an acknowledgment of something said or done by me. I am unwilling to mark any thing as contrary to my ideas of propriety, but declaring in all, I have seen or heard, I have nothing else to mark, I take the liberty of stating as what was considered by me as improper, *viz.* the suggestion that the witnesses in the course of the examination, that the enjoyment of the amnesty which they claimed, depended on the candour with which they gave testimony against others."

In page 75, the secretary lays down his pen and interrupts Mr. Brackenridge, while he is proceeding in his testimony, and says, "I observe one leading trait in your account, a disposition to excuse the principal actors, and before we go further, I must be candid and inform you, of the delicate situation in which you stand; *you are not within the amnesty; you have not signed upon the day; a thing we did not know, till we came on this ground, I mean the Western country, and though the government may not be disposed to act rigorously*

yet it has you in its power, and it will depend on the candour of your account, what your fate will be."

"Mr. Brackenridge answers. *I am not within the amnesty*, and am sensible of the extent of the power of the government; but were the narrative to begin again, I would not change a single word."

Mr. Brackenridge had conducted with such address, in a situation which rendered it necessary for him to temporize, that he knew he was in no danger from the usual mode of process, but he also knew, that the power of the government, with which he was threatened, conveyed another idea. He had observed, the innocent and the guilty, indiscriminately, in many instances, subjected to unusual sufferings and insults, by the power of government, as exercised by the secretary. If such powerful addresses were made to the hopes and fears of Mr. Brackenridge, who from his profession was able to judge of his own situation, what may we not expect was done with such ignorant people, as did not know what part of their conduct or expressions might be deemed criminal. It is observable, that though the *subpœna* for Mr. Brackenridge, came from judge Peters, yet the examination was conducted, and the terrors, &c. dispensed by the secretary.

## C H A P. XIX.

HAVING in the transactions already related, introduced my own agency, as seldom as the nature of the case would admit, I expect the reader will not be offended at finding what I did, or suffered, brought more frequently into view in what remains of the work, especially in the two succeeding chapters. I wish indeed that this part of it had been written by another hand, for I do not know a more disagreeable subject to write on, than one which involves personal considerations; yet being convinced that I could not have done justice to the general subject, if I had kept myself altogether out of view, I will make no further apology, but submit it to the decision of the public, whether *there is, or is not a cause.*

When colonel Morton, Mr. Redick, and myself, in the character of commissioners, waited on the secretary, then in company with governor Mifflin,

at Bonnet's camp, he treated me with decency, and apparent friendship, and when I told him, that some of the justices of the peace had commenced prosecutions against offenders, before the commissioners had returned to Philadelphia, and that on being informed, that the district judge and attorney were coming up with the army, they had been advised to desist till they would arrive, he approved of advising them to desist, and advised us to request some of the county judges to come to the camp, as soon as the judge and attorney should arrive, (they were with the rear of that wing) and that some plan would be settled with them, for distributing the prosecutions. At parting I told him, I designed to start for Philadelphia, in about eight or ten days. I gave the same information to General Lee at parting.

My reason for being particular in mentioning the time, when I intended to leave the country was, that it might not be said, that I went out of the way to avoid a scrutiny of my conduct, and my reason for staying so long, was to give a full opportunity for it; though I was conscious of having merited approbation, I suspected the secretary was more disposed to find fault. I had seen his report to the President, and observed the insidious misrepresentations it contained. I ought to have attended Congress sooner.

After both wings of the army had encamped in the vicinity of Youghiogany and Monongahela rivers, two of the judges of the court of Westmoreland county, general Jack, and Mr. Baird, men of very respectable characters, waited on the secretary and the judge, in order to be informed what offences would be proper

for the state magistrates to prosecute, agreeably to the secretary's advice, which I communicated to one of them ; but instead of consulting about the distribution of the prosecutions, as was expected, they were both strictly examined as witnesses against Mr. Gallatin and myself. They were urged to testify that Mr. Gallatin had expressed himself in a treasonable manner at the first Parkison's meeting, and when they denied having heard any such expressions, the secretary asserted that he had sufficient proofs of them already ; they however persisted in asserting that he used no such expressions, that they had been very attentive to his arguments at the meeting, and they stated the substance of them, and mentioned the abilities he had displayed, and the unremitting exertions he had made, on all proper occasions, to restore order, and to convince the citizens of the necessity of submitting to the laws : That his decision, talents and perseverance, had contributed more to the restoration of order than that of, perhaps, any other person, as he had been a member of all the meetings for that purpose, and acted with decision, when several others thought it prudent in many instances to temporize or were afraid to avow their sentiments.

In the examination respecting myself, no specific fact being alleged against me, it was rather an inquiry held on my character than an examination, and the object seemed to be, to prove me to be a bad man, as well as a criminal. The questions were calculated to procure testimony, either that I alone, or in connection with Messrs. Smilie and Gallatin had originated the opposition to the excise law, excited the insurrection, were enemies to the government, wished to over-

turn it, &c. Few men in that country could have been found, who knew my character and principles, and the situation of the country, better than those he now examined. They told him that the opposition to excises was brought into the country with the settlers, many of whom inherited an aversion to them from their fathers; that it was encreased by their situation; that it was not true that I had promoted the opposition in that country; that I had told in their hearing before there was any ground to apprehend an insurrection, that the excise law could not, nor would not, be repealed soon, and assigned satisfactory reasons for that opinion; that I had said it was my wish that the people would submit to it, that in their doing so their petitions for such amendments as would render its pressure more tolerable, would have more weight with congress, and the repeal of it in due time would the more easily be procured. They informed him also of the exertions I had made, and the arguments I had used, during the insurrection, to restore order and promote submission to the laws.

When judge Baird related some of the arguments which he had heard me express on one or other of these occasions, judge Peters was pleased to say, that they were some of the best he had ever heard on that subject, and that he could freely forgive me if I had done wrong, on account of having used them, but secretary Hamilton replied that he would never forgive me, because I had told or wrote lies about him.

I am obliged to judge Peters for his generosity. I know the humanity of his nature. His disposition to forgive is not the less valuable, that I stood in no need of its



exertions. I shall say nothing further, at this time, of the secretary's objecting to forgiveness, or the sensibility evident in his manner of doing it, farther than that it was not the intention of the constitution in vesting a President of the United States with authority to call out the militia to support the laws, suppress insurrections, &c. nor of Congress in directing the mode in which the militia should be called out, nor, I will add, was it the intention of the President in calling out so respectable an army, or the judge of the supreme court in granting the certificate required by law for that purpose, or of so many American citizens, in making such sacrifices, to enable a dependant secretary to satiate his unforgiving disposition on an individual for telling or writing lies on him, even if his assertion had not been totally unfounded; but of this in its proper place.

In conversation with those gentlemen, even in public company, he exposed himself to contempt, by speaking of me, in a manner that discovered a total disregard to truth, good policy, or propriety of character. Even when he was contradicted in calling me a bad and dishonest man, and testimony given of my character having long stood in a very different point of view, by those who were intimately acquainted with it, and whose veracity was unimpeachable, and when the confidence which my neighbours and others, who were best acquainted with me, had long reposed in me, was given as a proof of my being an honest man, having a consistent character, &c. he reluctantly admitted the force of that evidence with respect to my private character, but asserted that I was a vain man, and a dishonest politician, and had a very bad heart. Mr.

Gallatin and I had been elected members of congress shortly before this, and he censured the people severely for electing us, and added that they would never do well, nor have any thing done properly for them, while they were represented by such men. He expressed much surprise and indignation, at their reposing so much confidence in foreigners, that Gallatin and I were both foreigners and therefore not to be trusted. When it was answered, that I had been in the country from my youth, &c. and that Mr. Gallatin had come into it very young, and had been a citizen a competent length of time, to be legally qualified for the trust, that we were both sensible men, and had a sufficient stake in the country, to secure our interest, he persisted in saying, that we were bad hearted men and dishonest politicians, and that I particularly had told lies on him, in a pamphlet, entitled, "Thirteen letters, by a citizen," of which he asserted I was the author. He reproved them, for not coming to congress themselves, alleging that though we might as they had suggested, have more knowledge of public business, yet we were dishonest and dangerous politicians.

He no doubt discovered what was true, that the two judges were solid, sensible men, of respectable character, and well acquainted with public business; but how could he avoid discovering that they and I held the same political principles, and that if I had not held the political principles which I did, I would not have been the object of their choice. He knew that though they disapproved of the excise law in principle, yet they had done every thing which their

duty as citizens and public officers required of them, in supporting the execution, both of the federal excise law, and the excise of the state, during its continuance. He knew from evidences examined, prior to them, even under circumstances very unfavourable to impartial testimony, that I had not at any time done, nor said, any thing to promote opposition to the execution of the law. He knew by their testimony, that my language and conduct was favourable to submission to the law, before there was any apprehension of an insurrection, and that I had made every exertion in my power, to impress the people that were inflamed against the law, with a respect for the government, and a disposition to support the laws without exception, and that in doing this, they themselves, and I myself, had an intimate correspondence, and were in perfect confidence, and that we were equally objects of resentment for some time to the ignorant and obstinate opposers of the laws. He might also have easily known that several of those persons to whom he declaimed against me as a foreigner, had themselves come into the country since I did.

The blunders even of wise men are sometimes astonishing. However, I believe, we are not warranted in giving the appellation of wisdom to such persons, as are destitute of honour and virtue, let their station be ever so high, their talents ever so brilliant, or their influence ever so powerful. The reader will be able to judge for himself, how far the secretary's conduct was directed by wisdom, or governed by the principles of honour and virtue, on a review of those facts and others, that will be hereafter related.

To those who know the secretary's own history, his objecting to a man for being a foreigner, who has been thirty three years in the state of Pennsylvania, near thirty years of that time a head of a family and citizen, who contributed all in his power in accomplishing the revolution, both by his services in the provisional government, by committees, when the established government was abolished, and in the army on the most trying occasions, and who since the revolution has been almost constantly employed either in the public councils of the state or of the federal government; I say for secretary Hamilton to object to such a man as a foreigner, must be astonishing to those who have any knowledge of his own history; Nor will it perhaps be less surprising to those who are able to trace his conduct, to hear of his illiberality, in assuming to judge the badness of another person's heart, with whose character and conduct he was so little acquainted.

Various other instances are known of his endeavouring, by improper influence, to procure testimony against Messrs. Smilie, Gallatin, and myself, but it is not my object to swell the book with numerous details; a few well attested facts are sufficient to my purpose.

When the secretary was on his return, while he lodged in the house of captain R. Dicky, within a few miles of my residence, (I was then in Philadelphia,) after enquiring if I did not live near, he spoke of my character in his usual manner, and abused the people for sending me to Congress, adding that I was the principal promoter of the insurrection, &c. &c. Captain Dicky vindicated my character, and informed

him of my general conduct and character, as a friend to order, and of my exertions during the insurrection, &c. He had been acquainted with me long before either he or I lived in the western country, and therefore spoke of my general character with confidence. The secretary, full of resentment at hearing me advocated, exclaimed that I was a bad man, and that it was in vain to vindicate me, because he had the proofs of my guilt in his pocket. Captain Dicky alleged that this was not possible, but the secretary persevered in asserting it to be true, and asked Dicky if he had read the thirteen letters. Upon his answering in the affirmative, the secretary swore that he believed there was not an old woman in the country but what had read them, that they contained lies on him, and were written by me. Dicky offended at the secretary's scurrility against me, told him he had read them and believed the facts they contained; and would believe them till they were proved not to be true, let who would have written them. Captain Dicky himself had been one of the delegates of that township, at the Parkifon and Redstone meetings, from whence he was sent as one of the committee to the commissioners at Pittsburgh.

General White, whose treatment of the prisoners I have already taken notice of, abused my character in all companies, and told the most manifest falsehoods with respect to my conduct, when at Carlisle with the President, and when he was told that his assertions were not true, he gave secretary Hamilton for his author, saying that the secretary was present at the interviews with the President. I will just mention a

few instances of his conduct in this respect, of which I have the most authentic vouchers.

At table in the house of Mr. Kirkpatrick in Greenburgh, he told in a numerous company, that I had insisted on the President to send an army into the country, and that the President had answered, by saying, "Mr. Findley you have raised the devil, and you may lay him again yourself." On this major Dunham, who was present, remarked, "That, sir, is very unlike the President." The Reverend Mr. Powers had been alleging that his representations of my conduct were not probable, when general White appealed to the President's treatment of me, in confirmation of what he said. While he remained in the same family, and was as usual declaiming against me, he asserted that I had abused the characters of the whole people in the western counties to the President, in order to convince him of the necessity of sending an army against them, and that the President answered me by saying, "Mr. Findley you have raised the devil, but you cannot lay him again, or you may lay him again yourself," and that I replied, that the people in my neighbourhood were of the most implacable and ungovernable disposition, &c. &c. Mr. Kirkpatrick the owner of the house objected to this assertion, declaring that he had been acquainted with me many years so well, that he knew that this was not my manner of speaking, nor a conduct suited to my character, that I did not express myself in the manner which he had described on any occasion; that general White being now acquainted with the country must know that the people were not such as to answer this description, and that it was

highly improbable that I would give a character of them that they did not deserve. General White answered that I was a damned old hypocrite, and that he had made a point of telling the above wherever he came, and said I deserved no credit or popularity, and he was determined I should have none.

In the same family in the hearing of Hugh Ross, Esquire, and others, he asserted that I told the President that the people in the western counties were perverse and inimical to all good government, beyond conception, and so abandoned, as that no character, however influential, could restrain or persuade them, and observed that it would have been well, if the people had known of my having used that conversation before the election, as in that case they would not have confided in such a person as I was.

At the house of William Todd, Esquire, where he lodged, he enquired if I lived near; being answered that I did, but was gone to Congress; he said they might as well send nobody, that I did not represent the people at all. Being told by Mr. Baldridge (whose father-in-law, Mr. Todd was then attending in the State Senate) that the people there knew better, and that he could not take a readier way to insult their feelings, than to say so; he replied that I would not be heard in Congress, &c. He added, that if it had not been for my representation of the people to the President, he would not have sent the army among them at all; that being asked by the President, what sort of people the inhabitants of the western counties were, I answered they were the worst, and most hardened people on

earth, and that an army was absolutely necessary to reduce them to order.

Being asked if he had heard me say so, he said he had not, but had it from Mr. Hamilton, the secretary of the treasury, who heard it from my own mouth, and said that the secretary told him further that the President asked me if I thought that any thing less than sending the army would do to pacify the minds of the people, and that I replied that nothing less would do. When Mr. Baldrige, to convince him how little credit could be given to his assertions, informed him how far my conduct had always been the reverse of his statement of it, what great exertions I had made to preserve and restore order, and how well I stood with my neighbours; he asserted or swore, that if it had not been for Findley, Smilie, and Gallatin, there would have been no insurrection, and much more to the same purpose, here and elsewhere avowing it to be his object to render us unpopular, and giving the secretary for the author of the scandal and falsehood which he uttered against us. Indeed in the house of representatives of the state in the winter of 1794, a misrepresentation of what I had said to the President at Carlisle was made by a very respectable member, who had been with the army, and who pointed to the secretary, as his author, in a manner easily enough understood, though he was not named. I sent a true statement of it in writing to Mr. Gallatin, who corrected the misrepresentation on the floor of the house, and inserted my statement in his printed speech.

If the President's manner of conversing had been as well known to those with whom General White



communicated, as it appears it was to major Dunham, those assertions would not have gained any credit. Or if general White's true character had been known to the people, little respect would have been paid to his stories. Indeed his manners were such as to prevent confidence in his representations, if he had not given the secretary for his author, but finding that even with that aid he was not credited where I was personally known, I paid no respect to his assertions until I found the falsehoods were not only circulated among people in the western country, who knew me only by name, but also through other states. Though few, even of those, believed him at the time, yet being supported by the authority of the secretary's name, and my taking no pains to contradict his assertions, nor to enable my friends to do it, gave them a currency which they could not otherwise have procured, and determined me at last to take notice of them in this place. I had indeed determined to have treated any thing coming from general White with that silent contempt with which I usually treat every thing which comes from a man of his character and manners. However, knowing that time is favourable to truth, I have not been hasty in defending my own cause. This is the first attempt I have made to vindicate my character, and I do not do it by assertions. I have stated the whole correspondence, which Mr. Redick and myself had with the President at Carlisle.

It is observable that Mr. Redick and myself perfectly coincided in sentiments and conduct in conversing with the President, yet nothing has been asserted

against him ; the reason of the discrimination however is pretty obvious.

In our interview with the President, it will appear that he treated us with that decency and politeness, which was suitable to the character he has always sustained, and agreeably to the dictates of a policy dictated by a proper attention to the occasion and circumstances.

It will likewise appear that while we acted the part of honest men, in acknowledging the agitation that had prevailed, and the outrages that had been committed, which indeed would not only have been uncandid, but foolish to have denied, (as the truth was already known,) we at the same time represented that the majority of the people in the western counties had always been well disposed, and stated the circumstances, and explained the reasons, that prevented the well disposed people from being successful in their exertions to restore order sooner, and why the number of those who signed the amnesty, was not as great as could have been wished.

It will appear likewise that we assured the President that the well known outcries against the state courts, wages, salaries, &c. the insults offered to judges and other respectable citizens, the threats of burning, &c. &c. which made so much noise abroad, and kept the well disposed people in some places in fear, for a time, was principally conducted by an ignorant and obstinate class of people, who had little character or property to lose. That this circumstance had convinced the citizens generally of the necessity of exerting themselves in support of the laws, and convinced them that their

own peace and security depended on the due execution of them : And we gave it as our opinion, that this circumstance alone afforded to government ground of more unequivocal confidence than subscribing any formal assurances, or than could even be expected from the march of an army into the country. We also observed to him that judges and other respectable citizens in the western counties, who had given their opinion to the commissioners that an army was necessary, had seen sufficient reason to change their mind, and mentioned a letter from president Addison, and the unanimous resolution of the last Parkifon meeting, to prove this change of sentiment. In short, it will appear on reading the correspondence, that we from our own knowledge gave it as our opinion unequivocally, that the laws could be executed and atonements made in all the four counties, that with respect to the settlements near Parkifon's Ferry where we had not personal knowledge, and about which we were more strictly examined, we gave our opinion on the assurances received from others, whom we esteemed worthy of credit. So far were we from assigning the well known folly and obstinacy of a few ignorant people, and their insulting the state magistrates, or the design against the court of Westmoreland, &c. that had been discovered and prevented, as a cause why an army should be sent into the country, that we made use of these circumstances as the strongest ground of assurance that the march of an army was not necessary, because these circumstances made it the people's own interest to preserve the peace of the country, and effectually convinced them, that if they permitted

even a bad law to be opposed, or obnoxious officers to be abused, they eventually destroyed the best security for their own liberty and property, and we suggested that a sufficient test had been given as soon as could have been reasonably expected, all things considered; that the citizens were able and willing to preserve order and punish offenders, and that such offenders as had not signed the amnesty in time were too few in number, and too insignificant in character, to be proper objects for the strong hand of government, and that even these would have time enough to escape before the army could arrive.

These circumstances indeed, on weighing them maturely, in our own minds, were conclusive with ourselves, and from our own conviction, we stated them with candour and confidence to the President. Hence it is evident that that heat and inflammation, which produced alarming disorders for a time in the western country, and occasioned so much anxiety of mind to the citizens, was so far from being used by us as an argument in favour of sending an army, that it was honestly applied as the most conclusive argument against it. It is also evident that these disorders were stated to be few in number, and to have prevailed in but a few places, and conducted by such as could have but little influence in settled times. By examining the eleventh chapter, which describes the state of the country at and after the time of signing the amnesty, and the fourteenth chapter, which contains the information given by Mr. Redick and myself to the President at Carlisle, it will be seen whether or not we understood the state of the country, and whether we

gave a candid account of it. It will also be easily discerned that all the information we gave was calculated to convince the President, that the march of the army was not necessary for the purpose of procuring submission to the laws, and would not be successful in obtaining the proper subjects for making atonement.

To those, who are acquainted with general White's character, and with mine, no apology will be necessary for entering no further into a contest with him, than merely by stating facts to enable the citizens to judge for themselves, what credit ought to be given to his assertions. I have always been happy in having few enemies in private life, and consider it as a consoling reflection in my advanced age, that I have never had a quarrel with a neighbour. However, if it is my lot to have enemies, though I may regret the circumstance, yet my regret will be the less if I have given no just cause of offence, and if my enemies are such men, as are neither respectable for the morality of their principles, or the decency of their manners. It would give me sensible pain to know that any conduct of mine had given cause of offence to a good man.

Numerous other stories have been circulated as from secretary Hamilton and his friend general White, which as I have never taken pains to obtain vouchers to prove, I shall pass over in silence. The story, however, of the latter insulting me at Carlisle was not true. I have never yet seen him, so as to be able to distinguish him from another man. I was informed, however, of his observing me, and speaking of me when I was put of hearing, in such language as was suitable to his character ; for though I do not know his

person, I have not been so little conversant with the officers of the late army, and the citizens of New-Jersey, as to be unacquainted with his fame. I need scarcely be at the pains to deny that I went on my knees to the President to beseech him to send forward the army, for though this has been circulated to a very great distance on the authority of general White, I presume few sensible people gave credit to it, and the correspondence with the President, here published, is a full refutation of it. I will just add that the report in the eastern counties, that my son was concerned in the riot on Webster, the collector of excise, was absolutely false, yet this was asserted with such confidence through Pennsylvania, that even my friends for some time admitted it to be true, but supposed it to have been without my knowledge.

## C H A P. XX.

**A**F T E R having given so full a view of the insurrection, and the measures connected with it, and of the influential secretary's virulence against myself and others, I beg leave to call the reader's attention to a concise relation of my own conduct, respecting the excise law ; it will, however, be necessary to preface this with an account of my conduct and principles respecting the federal government generally. Under the confederation I always contributed what I could to have the requisitions of the old Congress carried into effect ; but after the fatigues and risks of the war were over, I ardently wished to have a more efficient general government, and in the state legislature contributed to the revision of the confederation, by voting for delegates to the general convention. When the federal constitution became a subject of discussion, and was submitted to the state conventions by Congress,

I had several exceptions to it, and wished amendments to the instrument to be recommended, and an adjournment previous to ratification. I was the more solicitous to obtain the last, on account of some circumstances of irritation that were unfriendly to cool discussion at the time; but both were refused. However, when I observed that most of the other states took sufficient time to deliberate before they called their conventions, and that the conventions of the other states very generally recommended amendments to the consideration and adoption of the first Congress, which was to meet under the government, I became convinced, that delaying in order to call another general convention, in the then state of things, would be highly inconvenient, and approved of the putting the government in operation. My sentiments were well known to my friends, and it is also well known that no opposition was made to putting the government into operation in any part of the western counties, nor were there any heats or disturbance on account of it.

I indeed, on cool reflection, became convinced, that some of my objections to it were not well founded, and the first Congress having early recommended some of the amendments I wished, and which have been since ratified, gave confidence that other amendments might be attained, when they became necessary. I indeed embraced the government as my own and my childrens inheritance, for though I knew it had some defects partly arising from indispensable causes, yet I believed it to be capable of being well administered, and on the whole, the best government in the world.



Though from mistaken party spleen, myself and others who acted the part I did, have been called Antifederalists, as a name of reproach, yet I do, and always did, treat the appellation with contempt. If we erred, it was from an excess of zeal for federalism, and a jealousy lest the federal republican principles of the government were not sufficiently guarded, and in this we agreed with the majority of the citizens of the United States, who recommended, with the first Congress, who adopted, and with the legislatures who ratified the amendments. I never have been found among those, who opposed or embarrassed the measures of a government. Though I knew and acknowledged that the first constitution of Pennsylvania had defects, and assisted afterwards in revising it, yet I never was found among those who combined to embarrass the measures of that government, but contributed all in my power to support its operations and prevent its perversion.

I, in common with other citizens, was attentive to the operations of the federal government in its outset, and though I was pleased with many things done by it, yet before it had been two years in operation, I was surprized to observe so much of the legislative business referred to the heads of newly erected departments, and especially at the originating revenue systems being referred to the head of an executive department. This influential power being specifically vested in the House of Representatives, and of an untransferable nature, the transferring it to an executive officer seemed the more extraordinary. Indeed, people generally were surprized to observe, not only petitions, but the most

important legislative business, referred to one or other of the secretaries.

Being elected a member of the second Congress, I took my seat with a determination to oppose the reference of legislative business to executive officers, otherwise than to call for such information as they in their official capacity might be able to give. A number of members who had acquiesced in this practice in the beginning, became convinced of the impropriety of it and opposed it in the second Congress. My opposition to it did not arise from any personal aversion to the secretaries to whom the business was referred, but solely from an opinion, that it was unconstitutional and improper, and that it was really oppressive to the officers themselves, especially to the secretary of the treasury, to whom the originating of all matters, respecting revenue, were referred. I had recently seen a striking instance in Pennsylvania of the bad effects, both to the public and the officer, resulting from transferring a multiplicity of business to an executive officer, and was sensible that these references prevented the house from possessing so much information within itself, as if the measures originated with committees, and that it laid a foundation for an in and out of door influence, to combine through a secretary as a center of connection, which might bias the deliberations of the house, and which could not so easily influence a committee of fifteen members, chosen from each state; and that such committee would have less inducements to report the state of the revenues in an imposing manner, or to conceal at any time their real situation. I had no apprehension, however, that the secretary of

the treasury would take umbrage at the house resuming the exercise of its own powers, until I was informed, that he was highly offended at the first opposition that was made to a reference of revenue business to him to originate, and threatened, that if this was refused, he would resign his office. Though I exerted myself in that opposition, yet I was not alone: it was supported by a number of the most distinguished federalists and experienced politicians in the house, and when the question was taken, it was lost by a very small majority. On this occasion, not only the secretary himself was alarmed, but those that attached themselves to his interest out of doors were much agitated. A few days after the vote, I heard a respectable revenue officer in a public company say, that a set of d—d fellows in Congress had attempted to take the originating of revenue measures out of the hands of the secretary, and that if they succeeded, all confidence would be lost, and that certificates had fallen considerably in two days, in consequence of the attempt. This agitation with a certain description of people out of doors, and the extreme anxiety discovered by his friends in the house, to support the secretary's originating influence, changed my fears, that this undue connection of legislative and executive business would at some period produce an undue combination of interest, into real suspicions, that it had already produced this effect.

However, though the opposition to ministerial originating of revenue systems, was supported by a large minority, it did not succeed in the second Congress, nor indeed in the third, without difficulty and delay, and when a committee of ways and means was appoint-

ed, in an advanced stage of the session, which sat in the winter and spring of 1794, a majority of the committee were so attached to their usual mode of proposing revenue measures, that a sub-committee, chosen out of the committee of ways and means, immediately referred the business to the secretary. In this way, the taxes on loaf sugar, snuff, &c. were originated. It is known, that during the next session, the secretary resigned, and that before he withdrew, he reported to the house a plan for new modifying the revenue system, in such a manner as to put the disposal or arrangement of the revenue measures, as much as possible, out of the power of future Houses of Representatives. This report was introduced, without being called for by the house. In the present Congress, no opposition has been made to the appointment of a committee of ways and means, nor has the business been referred by it to the secretary of the treasury. Though this statement may seem unconnected with the insurrection, yet it leads to the probable source of the secretary's resentments against me, as well as against Smilie and Gallatin, who are of the same sentiments with me, respecting those measures, and as general White, who appears to have been only the instrument of the secretary's vengeance, acknowledged, when he was detected in asserting falsehoods against me, for which he gave the secretary as author, that his object was to destroy the people's confidence in me; it goes far to confirm the apprehension, that political party spleen influenced the secretary's conduct in the western expedition. On what other ground, could the secretary ex-

prefs so much resentment against the people for electing us to Congress.

Though an unqualified power of levying excises was vested in Congress, yet an expectation that that power would never be exercised but in cases of the last necessity, which had been indusiriously inculcated by the most influential advocates of the government, and fondly believed by all, had a tendency to silence objections to the government going into operation ; but when in the second session of the first congress, the secretary of the treasury of his own motion originated an excise bill, and laid it before Congress, (which however the house of Representatives laid aside at the time) the alarm given by the appearance of an excise law in so early a stage of the operations of the government, and its apparent rejection, gave such alternate emotions of grief and joy in the state of Pennsylvania, as is more easily imagined than described. This circumstance enabled the house of Representatives, in the state Legislature, to be so unanimous in requesting the senate of Congress to reject the excise bill, in which business the city members took a lead. (See Chap III.)

When the excise law was enacted, I was sincerely grieved at the introduction of an excise system, with all its oaths and officers, and the unavoidable inequality of its pressure. I was also apprehensive that it might put the vigilance and energy of our new born government prematurely to too severe a test, and abate that confidence in it with which it was so generally embraced at its outset, and which was so necessary for its support, until it derived strength from age and

habits of submission. I reflected that the execution of this law might have obstacles thrown in its way in all places, but especially where it would be peculiarly oppressive and consequently most obnoxious. I reflected that to secure a prompt submission to the operations of this law, the aid of a judiciary and proper executive officers should be extended so as to correspond with and support the officers in the execution of the law, and protect the citizens who might be, or who supposed they were, oppressed by them. The want of this in the federal government, I thought augured ill to the prompt execution of a law, the operation of which was found difficult to carry into effect in the best established, and most energetic, governments.

But did I then, as the secretary and many of his friends have maliciously asserted, set about to promote opposition to it? No; my conduct was the very reverse of this.

In June 1791, the operation of the excise was to commence, but in the western counties, and I presume in many other districts in the union, offices were not provided for the entering of stills; and the law on experiment proved to be in so great a measure impracticable, that a revision of it was immediately found to be necessary. An advertisement was published, inviting the citizens of the western counties to meet at Redstone old Fort, to consider and give advice how they should proceed with respect to the excise law; on hearing of the intended meeting, reflecting on the chagrin which prevailed in the minds of the people on account of the so unexpected introduction of a system which they so much abhorred, and knowing

the violent opposition that had been given to the execution of the state excise law in some parts of the country, I was considerably alarmed, lest that if only such people attended the meeting, that were most violently opposed to the excise law, measures unfavourable to the peace of the country might be promoted. Therefore, though no correspondence had taken place between those who promoted the meeting, and the people of the county in which I reside, I determined to attend it, and to take some discreet men with me. I never yet knew who first promoted the meeting, but the design was lawful and proper, it was to conduct measures for petitioning Congress in order to quiet the minds of the people. Three men accompanied me to the meeting, viz. John Moore, then judge of the court of Westmoreland, colonel John Shields and captain Samuel Manhead. I mention their names, because they have always been respectable for their love of order, and for supporting the government and the laws. It being the harvest season, the meeting was not numerous, there were few from a great distance; and no kind of disorders were attempted. After the meeting was opened, and the hardships, that would result from the excise law, explained in some addresses to the chair, I observed, that though the principles of the excise law, and the local oppressive effects it would have on the western counties, were developed, yet the constitutional power of Congress to levy it was not sufficiently explained. This induced me to address the chair in a discourse of some length, in which I first asserted and explained the constitutional authority of Congress to levy excises, and said, that they themselves had acknowledged that

right, by adopting the government, electing representatives to it, and having the state officers sworn to support it. I next proceeded to shew the bad effects of violent opposition to it, and endeavoured to convince them, that the only choice they had, was either to pay the tax, or otherwise to refrain from stilling, and suggested that to refrain from stilling altogether, was a much more tolerable evil than any mode of actual opposition, and that in the mean time, it was their duty to lay their grievances before Congress by petition, but that as petitioning itself was an acknowledgment of the authority of government, in the case respecting which they addressed it, petitioning was therefore inconsistent with opposition. I concluded by pointing out the evils in the excise law and the hardships peculiar to their local situation, to which their petitions should apply, and took particular care not to invite them to expect an immediate repeal, but encouraged them to look for relief to be obtained by a revision of it, as I knew it could never be executed till it was revised, and informed them, that in its present state, it was impracticable.

I appeared to be heard with attention, at least there was no appearance of the contrary. I was informed however, when I sat down, that one man during the early part of the discourse, slowly lifted up his staff to a striking position, and the observer was prepared to prevent the stroke, by seizing the staff, but when I came to point out the grounds to which the petitions should apply, the staff was let down again, without being exercised. I expected a petition had been prepared to be offered at the meeting, but it was not. (See chap.



III.) No argument was offered in my hearing, nor observation made that was calculated to encourage riotous opposition to the law.

This was the only popular meeting, either respecting the excise or any other law, that ever I attended or addressed in the western counties, until after the insurrection took place, and I did nothing in the meeting except making the discourse I have mentioned; my avowed intention of attending it, was to pay the wages of the militia, that had served on general Harmer's campaign, many of whom resided in that part of the country, and attended at the meeting.

In about two weeks after this meeting, I had to attend a session of Assembly at Philadelphia, and did not return till the week before the election, at which I was chosen to represent the state in the second Congress. At the county courts, which sat the week preceding the week of the election, there appeared a publication in the Pittsburgh gazette, charging me with being one of the authors and promoters of excises; it was also sent to the election districts. There was no time left for me to reply to it, if I had been so disposed; it did not however prevent my being elected by a large majority, though it no doubt made that majority less. The candidate opposed to me, was a member of the Pittsburgh meeting, which in 1791, prepared a petition to Congress respecting the excise law, and published some indiscreet resolutions against several other measures of government. (See chapter II.) The person who was the candidate opposed to me at the election, had been a uniform federalist and never that I knew of discovered any disapprobation of the excise

law, before he was a member of the Pittsburgh meeting. I censured the resolutions freely, both to the gentleman to whom I have alluded, and to such other members of that meeting as I had an opportunity of seeing. I was at home, when the meeting was held at Pittsburgh, in August 1792, and was requested by general Wilkin of Pittsburgh to be at Pittsburgh, at the time of it, not as a member, but to have an opportunity of giving my advice against intemperate resolutions, if any such should be offered. I declined attending and gave him such reasons for doing so, as satisfied him afterwards, if not at the time. I had always thought it improper for a meeting convened for the express purpose of preparing a petition or memorial to government, to avail themselves of that opportunity to censure the measures of government. My sentiments on this subject were well known to my friends. Mr. Brackenridge in page 22, and some other places, of his incidents, seems to overrate the unpopularity that was attached to persons who advocated submission to the execution of the excise law; it was not made a test of character, to my knowledge, to the degree he mentions. I knew of no men preferred at elections, for the state legislature, or any other purpose, for opposing it, either by word or deed, at the elections in which I was concerned. The most popular official characters in Westmoreland county, judges and others, were known to be in favour of the execution of it. In Fayette county, James Findley was known to be an advocate for submission to the excise tax, yet he was an associate judge, a senator and again a judge, as it suited his conveniency; few indeed, how-

ever, advocated the principles of the law itself, and that will always be the case; but many used arguments in abatement of the hardships arising from its operation. However, I do not dispute the truth of Mr. Brackenridge's remarks, with respect to what fell under his own observation, and his book for the most part, treats only of such things, as did fall under his immediate observation.

The inspector's house, with the attack on which the insurrection commenced, is said to be about eight miles south west of Pittsburgh. I live about forty miles north east of it, consequently, near fifty miles distant. I never have been in the part of the country where it lays, nor had I ever been in the settlement, where the insurrection is believed to have originated, until last summer, that having occasion to go to Washington, I took the road which passes through Mingo Creek settlement, when I planned to lodge a night at the house where general White gave such a display of his total want of the feelings of humanity. I was a perfect stranger to the road and to the inhabitants. I had heard indeed of a number of decent respectable people living in that settlement, and I being so much in public life, they had no doubt heard of me, but not one of the citizens in that settlement, ever had a correspondence with me even by letter. None of the inhabitants ever happened to be members of the public bodies where I was employed.

Yet the secretary and his emissaries have not scrupled to assert, that I was the author of the insurrection, that I set it a going, but had cunning enough, to keep myself clear, and many other such malicious

and totally unfounded assertions. Smilie and Gallatin were usually connected with me in the charge of promoting the insurrection, and planning to overturn the government, &c.

I did not hear of the marshal coming up to serve the processes, nor was I informed circumstantially of the attacks on the inspector's house till after the Braddock's field rendezvous, viz. near two weeks after the inspector's house was burned, my first correct information of the business was received from a young man in the neighbourhood, who had been on a visit to see relations in Washington county, and had for curiosity attended at the Mingo Creek meeting and at Braddock's field. He called at my house in the morning to tell me the news, and informed me very circumstantially respecting all the measures, and particularly of Bradford's speech at Mingo Creek meeting, and his subsequent conduct in procuring the mail to be robbed, promoting the rendezvous, &c. and of the agitation among the people and their confidence in Bradford, &c. I had some days before seen the advertisement of the meeting intended to be held at Parkison's ferry, and of the mail having been robbed, and had gone to Greensburgh to enquire what the meeting was intended for, and from what source the appointment came. I there got an indistinct account of the burning of the inspector's house, but no further information about the meeting, but in consultation with my friends there we agreed not to take any notice of the meeting, and I advised my neighbours to the same course, but on receiving circumstantial information from the young man, and learning that the out-

pages were occasioned by the marshal serving writs, and being further informed by him that it was highly dangerous for me, or any other person, to ensure Bradford's measures I was agitated with such a mixture of grief and anger, that I spoke of their conduct with unguarded severity. He urged me in vain to be cautious, suggesting that if my language came to be known it would bring me into trouble; though I knew he was my friend I paid no respect to his advice, and scarcely took it in good part, till in less than an hour after, one of the country commissioners called to inform me of the alarming news. He also advised me to speak of it more cautiously, lest I should come to trouble, and told me that a party were gone that day from the south of Westmoreland to attack Wells, the collector of excise, at his house in Fayette county. I learned through another channel that threatening letters were sent to the next township to the one in which I lived, in order to excite a party to pay an unfriendly visit to Webster the collector of Bedford county. It is easier to imagine than describe my sensations on receiving such alarming information, in such rapid succession. After composing my mind in order to resolve with the greater coolness what was best to be done, I concluded that the only practicable method to stop the progress of anarchy and outrage was to procure as many discreet persons as possible to attend as delegates at the Parkison's meeting. As soon as my mind was made up to this purpose, I went to the nearest tavern on the great road, and sent for Mr. Todd, one of the judges of the court, to meet me, in order to consult what was best to be done. We agreed to hold

an election for delegates, and for this purpose to warn the people, and to persuade discreet persons to accept of the appointment. While I was at the tavern a message came to my house from general Jack at Greensburgh, recommending the very plan I was pursuing. It is remarkable that the same measure was suggested by the urgency of the occasion in Fayette and Westmoreland, and at Pittsburgh, without any correspondence between the people of these different counties (See Chap. IX.)

Besides the delegates, I advised the judges and other discreet citizens to attend and mix with the people, alleging that every one of them might find some man to converse with, who might take their advice or be bettered by their information, and I went myself with the same design. It was with this view that general Jack, judge Beard, and other respectable and influential citizens attended at Parkison's Ferry meeting. While I was there, and before the meeting had proceeded far in its business, I received a letter by express from the commissioners, who had come in great haste as far as Greensburgh. In the letter they informed me that they had sent forward an express to go to my house, but were glad to find that I was gone to the meeting to promote the very object for which they were sent by the President, viz: to restore order. They explained the nature of their mission in their letter to me, but informed me that the success of it must depend on meeting with correspondent sentiments in the people, and requested me to inform the meeting of their arrival, and to endeavour to have arrangements made for opening a correspondence

between them and the meeting, but not to read their letter to me, to the meeting. (See Chap. IX.)

In short, I attended at every meeting that was held for the purpose of restoring order, except the second meeting at Parkison's Ferry, which was convened to give assurances that order was already restored, and I also attended at different worshipping congregations, at the court, and at every place where I could get an opportunity to converse with the people; and where I thought it could be useful I addressed them in a public manner. In the most critical situations, I neither temporized nor concealed my sentiments. This was indeed a new scene to me, for I never had been accustomed to address popular meetings. I also travelled into different places of the country, in order to stir up such as I thought were capable of instructing their neighbours, and to assist them with the best reasons and most powerful arguments that I could suggest; and several applied to me of their own accord, to assist them with such information and arguments as I thought could be useful. Indeed, from the time I engaged in the business, which was as early as I had opportunity, I took no rest, either to body or mind, and suffered much grief and vexation on account of the distress and folly of a number of people with whose situation and anxiety of mind I sincerely sympathized, while many of them were offended at the part I took, and treated my advices with contempt, and my assertions for some time with discredit; but I was always supported and encouraged by citizens, who had in settled times the greatest credit for understanding and patriotism.

The whole of my conduct was stated and proved to the secretary in stronger terms than those in which I have related it, by men of the most respectable character, who were not only eye and ear witnesses to much of it, but who were fellow labourers with me, in promoting the restoration of order and submission to the laws, and who also testified to the uniformity of my conduct and sentiments both before and after the insurrection.

But the secretary had more early and unequivocal proofs within his own knowledge of my endeavours to have the excise law well executed as long as it continued unrepealed. Early in the winter of 1792, I wrote a letter to the President, at the instance of governor Mifflin, and some time after another at the instance of the Attorney General of the United States, and the attorney of the district of Pennsylvania, relating to the case of Beer and Kerr, both of which I had reason to believe were given to the secretary; in these letters I gave my opinion that if special sessions of the court were held in the country, the courts would be protected and competent juries found to confirm this opinion. I stated in substance, that the state courts had never been insulted, nor the want of good juries complained of in cases arising under the state excise law, or other cases equally obnoxious, and at the same time suggested, that carrying people all the way to Philadelphia, was so obnoxious, that doing it might be attended with difficulty, if not with risk, and would render witnesses more difficult to procure; that supposing the persons charged to be innocent, as I was confident



those in question were, the taking them to a distance for trial, would be the more unpopular.

In the preceding session, when I knew the secretary was preparing a report for the revision of the excise law, I by letter, requested a conversation with him on the subject. In the consequent interview, I informed him, that though I disapproved of the excise law, I was sensible it could not be released from the appropriation until we could supply its place with another tax, which I knew Congress was not then disposed to do, that therefore I wished by all means to give it a fair trial and have it promptly executed, and mentioned my apprehension of bad consequences to the government, if the execution of it was trifled with, because that the credit and authority of the government were equally pledged for the execution of all its laws, so that if one law was impracticable or opposed with success, the authority of other laws would be also disregarded, and the number and magnitude of crimes would be increased by impunity. I recommended several alterations, which I thought would render the execution of the excise law more practicable; among those, were lowering the tax, at least till the people were better reconciled to the execution of the law, and establishing sessions of the court in the country. On this last I laid great weight, and lamented, that competent authority had not been vested in the state courts for that purpose.

When the report was made, few of such amendments were proposed as I had advised, some of them I endeavoured to introduce in the house, and succeeded so far as to have the tax made one cent lower

than the secretary reported, but this did not equalize it with the tax on other spirits, in proportion to the then selling prices in the market; much less did it answer the political purpose of reconciling the people to it.

It had become customary, for the members to read the reasoning with which the secretary always accompanied his reports, as arguments on the floor, to which I had been always opposed; but on this occasion, I opposed the practice with more than usual warmth and perseverance, rising more frequently than I had ever done in the committee of the whole, to declare it out of order, &c. and asserting, that the members exclusively were entrusted to give information of the state of the country for the purposes of taxation, and that the information given by the individual members, formed that aggregate of local knowledge, which ought to guide the discretion of the house, in accommodating the laws to the circumstances of the citizens, and that the information received from the secretary's closet, being collected from revenue officers, or other agents who were not publicly responsible for the information they gave, and who frequently were interested in giving it wrong, and the secretary himself not being constitutionally qualified, nor responsible for it, I considered it as no authority for our conduct, and improper to be used for that purpose. I do not remember, that his reports have been made use of on the floor, otherwise than for information respecting his official statements, since that time, but the opposition commenced on this occasion was persevered in, till it was finally successful, and until the house resumed the ex-

ercise of originating revenue systems. The hand I had in this, and some censures I passed in the house on some systems originated by the secretary, no doubt rendered me obnoxious to him, and the more so as the public mind testified in favour of this change, at the next election, but more decidedly at the election which took place in Pennsylvania, previous to his arrival in the western country. This accounts for his being so outrageously offended at Gallatin and myself being elected into Congress, and he and his friend general White making such malicious exertions, and asserting such mean falsehoods, to destroy my popularity, as they expressed it. A mighty object indeed, for the man who assumed or had ascribed to him by his friends, the honour of guiding the helm of state, both in its legislative and executive measures! It also accounts for his officious endeavours to influence the Virginia militia, respecting the election then depending in that state; but it is beyond my purpose to give a statement of his exertions in that business.

One charge which he mentioned with great sensibility and resentment, was, that I had wrote a pamphlet, called "thirteen letters," which he said, contained lies on him; but he has neither proved me to be the author of that pamphlet, nor pointed out any particular lie it contained. Writing is not my profession, nor have I ever engaged largely in it, nor published a falsehood to my knowledge. I never have in my life published a sentence that I would deny being the author of, if decently called upon, nor did I ever give a piece to a printer anonymously, or direct him to conceal my name. However, if the secretary will acknowledge

himself to be the author, if true, of a great variety of pieces, which have by public opinion, been ascribed to him, I will make a full acknowledgment of all I ever published; these, it is true, will be few in number, but they will discover that I have been consistent in my principles. I am mistaken, if on examining the numerous productions ascribed to him, the author might not be quoted in opposition to himself, and if some of the most valuable characters in the United States would not appear to have been traduced by his pen. If I were explicitly to deny a charge made in this way, he might charge me in the same manner with writing Catullus, Massachusitenis, the state of parties, Manlius, &c. &c. and though I would acknowledge they contained untruths, I could not easily prove that I had not wrote them, for I have spread some of them all, though the secretary or some of his friends know best their authors. To satisfy other citizens, however, I will assert, that I have not for several years published a line in the Pittsburgh gazette or any other newspaper, except in the spring previous to the insurrection, when I sent up to the editor of the Pittsburgh gazette, a correct account of the revenue laws that had been enacted that session, in order to counteract the false reports, that I had been informed were circulated concerning them.

The secretary was mistaken with respect to the spread of the thirteen letters, which he said, had been read by every old woman in the western country. I have since been particular in examining, and can discover but a few of them to have been spread in the western survey, previous to the insurrection. I heard

of but one in the town or county of Washington; there might have been more; but after the secretary had discovered so much resentment against that pamphlet, all that could be procured of them were dispersed, and whatever doubts might have been entertained of the truth of the facts suggested in them, the secretary's asserting that they contained falsehoods without particularizing any of them, has been considered as a confirmation of the truth of the whole they contained. I had put some of them into the hands of my friends, as I do of all political publications, and more of them I believe were in the north of Westmoreland, than in all the western counties besides; and I have not discovered that any person who read them, engaged in the insurrection: there was not one of them known to be in Mingo creek settlement. They appear chiefly to contain a statement of facts, from which inferences are drawn. If but a few of the leading facts were proved to be false, others would be discredited and the inferences would fall of course. This would be a more easy and honorable method, than holding an inquisition at the head of an army.

An apology is necessary to the reader for engaging his attention so long about what relates to myself. I would not have done it merely on the account of Alexander Hamilton and William Findley, but a head of the financiering department, an influential member of the cabinet, who not only conducted his department in such a manner as to render a powerful military expedition necessary, and most probably with a view to promote that event, and who in that expedition was understood to influence its movements and to direct

and assume the exercise of the judiciary authority, without being attached to the expedition in any known and responsible character, and who, thus armed with the exercise of military authority, attempted to chastise the people in one state for electing such persons as he disapproved of, and to influence the elections of another, is a consideration of more importance to the citizens, and the knowledge of it may have greater influence on the future measures of the executive department, than merely considered as relating to Alexander Hamilton as a citizen. What respects myself is of no other importance to the public, than that as a Representative of the people, and on account of my political principles and conduct, I was marked out as a victim of ministerial vengeance. All the secretary's exertions could have no effect on the opinion of the citizens with whom I enjoy intimate society, and as all my ambition is to spend the remainder of my days in a comfortable retirement in the bosom of my family and friends, when I cease to represent them in a public capacity, this I can enjoy without having it impaired by Mr. Hamilton's virulence. Thankful indeed I am, that though no government can prevent a man of superior talents, dangerous principles, and malevolent temper, from being armed at times with a dangerous portion of public power, yet such are our government and laws that such men are restrained from gratifying, though not from discovering, what they would do if they had power.

After an inquisition accompanied with the most illegal inducements to promote discovery, and notwithstanding the secretary's repeated asseverations to the

witnesses that he was already possessed of proofs of criminality against Smilie, Gallatin, and me, no testimony was found even to lay a foundation for suspicion. The situations in which we lived, and the conduct of the people around us, forbid suspicion of either combination among ourselves or connection with the insurgents; living as we do near 30 miles from each other, we have little or no correspondence but when we meet in Philadelphia, and residing from thirty to fifty miles from the seat of the insurrection, and having no connection or correspondence in that part of the country, nor personal acquaintance with the citizens residing in the settlement where the outrages commenced, we had no opportunity of influencing them either for or against the excise law, nor of knowing that these citizens were more determined in their opposition to it than others, nor did we know of the existence of the Mingo creek association which is supposed to have produced the insurrection, till we were informed of it afterwards. Though the heat and inflammation spread into the counties in which we are resident, during the progress of the disorders, yet no person from either of these counties had any part in originating the insurrection, nor did the official certificate from judge Wilson, nor the proclamation of the President bottomed on that certificate, suggest that an insurrection existed in these counties, but confined it expressly to the counties of Washington and Allegany. It is also known that though the whole people of the county of Fayette refused to sign the amnesty, and though a great proportion of the people of Westmoreland declined signing it, or varied the form of the assurances, yet only three

persons were sought after or taken prisoners from these two counties. Against two of these no bills were found, and the third, whose character and fate is described in page 211, was a person of whom I had not the most distant knowledge, though he resided in the same county about twenty miles distant. Smilie and Gallatin living in Fayette county, of course did not sign the amnesty, and for particular reasons they would not have done it even if it had been produced to them for that purpose. I did not sign it on the day appointed myself, though I had laboured to promote the signing of it by others. I thought it most consistent with the station which I occupied and the part I acted, to put it out of the power of any person to say, that I had signed the amnesty to avoid a scrutiny of my conduct. That scrutiny has been made by an artful, a discerning, and revengeful enemy, and not even the semblance of exciting opposition to the execution of the law, or of enmity to the government, or of endeavouring to embarrass its measures, or even of the crime of treating an excise officer unpolitely, has been discovered. Indeed I treated the inspector with the same attention that I had done formerly, and Mr. Wells, the collector, with greater attention than I had ever formerly done. I never heard him complained of for illegal seizures or other acts of oppression, my only complaint against him was want of decision and address in the execution of the law. Nor was there any testimony found against Messrs. Smilie and Gallatin, but much was testified in their favour. It was known and testified that I had discountenanced the meetings that denounced the excise law and the officers under it, and that I censured



the resolves as indiscreet and impolitic ; that in short I had discountenanced every measure except petitioning, and that I encouraged this as a direct acknowledgement of the authority of the government, and as a means of turning the attention of the people to it as the only lawful and practicable source of relief.

Though I had never heard any person advocate a riotous opposition to the excise law, yet I was always watchful to reprove any expressions that I thought leaned that way, and to describe the dangerous effects that encouraging them would have on society. Often have I said on such occasions, that to countenance riots against the execution of any law, was like throwing the bridle on a wild horse's neck, of whom, when he was let loose, there was no telling what course he would take, or where he would stop, and suggested that even liberty exercised without a subordination to rule would soon become allied to the worst passions, and produce the most arbitrary and ruinous effects, such sentiments as these were frequently introduced in conversation and in my letters to my friends, and I can appeal to all who had an opportunity of knowing, to testify if I ever spoke, wrote, or acted contrary to these sentiments.

Perhaps it will be replied that I wrote a letter to Mr. Petrikin at Carlisle during the time of the insurrection, and that as he was charged with promoting sedition, my letter to him must have been of a seditious nature. This conclusion was industriously promoted by some, but certainly a knowledge of my conduct respecting the insurrection would have justified another conclusion; however I will insert the letter, and leave

the original with the printer, but first I will state the circumstances in which it was written.

On the evening of the 1st of September 1794, when I had just returned from the Redstone meeting, and was full of anxiety on account of the disposition evidenced there which occasioned the miscarriage of the design of that meeting, and the uncertainty of what might be the event, a friend who was going over the mountains to Greencastle and Carlisle offered to carry letters to my relations. I wrote letters to two of my brothers-in-law, the one near Greencastle, and the other near Carlisle, viz. John Coughran and Joseph Junkin, both known to be well disposed sensible men. Before I went to bed I received a letter from Mr. Petrikin of Carlisle, the purport of which was to inform me of a county meeting to be held at Carlisle, and though he did not explain the intention of the meeting, yet I suspected that it might possibly be his intention to dissuade the militia from obeying the orders of the President, and though I hoped there would not be a necessity for the militia to march, yet I knew that reports of their refusing to march, or appearing to join the insurgents, would tend to defeat our endeavours to restore order. Under this impression I immediately wrote an answer to Petrikin's letter. Under the same impressions and with the same views I would have written to any person existing, if there had been the same prospect of doing good, or preventing mischief. The only dread I had in writing it was, that the contents of the letter might some way or other find their way to the insurgents, and subject me to trouble from them. Under

this impression I omitted the names of those who promoted the disorders which the letter describes, and gave no advice, but confined myself to giving a relation of the state of things with us. The description which I gave, I thought might have a happy effect in preventing the citizens of Cumberland county from doing any thing in imitation of the rioters, or that would encourage them. However, as things took a more favourable turn with us, the contents of the letter could not have found their way back in time to do me any harm, for though the impression of terror was the greatest at the Redstone meeting of any instance that had fell under my immediate observation, it was the last exertion made by those who directed the robbing of the mail, and the expulsion of those who wrote letters; my letter to Mr. Petrikin indeed was hastily wrote and rudely digested. However as much has been said about it, I shall take the liberty of inserting it.

September 1st, 1794.

" Dear Sir,

" Yours of the 26th ult. I have just received, and as a bearer starts early in the morning, though it is now late, I shall acknowledge the receipt of it before I sleep. Our riotous opposition to the excise law has gone the length of expelling the excise officers from this district, but not without flagrant instances of outrage and disorder. Several of those who took a lead in this business had been early friends to liberty, the most active of

them were warm federalists. The dislike to the excise law is general, but the leaders of the confusion do not now stop at this, for some who have been zealous friends to the federal government now declaim in favour of total disunion and independence. Such is too generally the conduct of unprincipled men, even a good cause would be injured by receiving support from such \*. Though on proper occasions I have endeavoured to inform the public mind so as to promote a repeal of the excise law, or more essential amendments, yet I was always watchful against riots or any thing that might tend to promote any unconstitutional exertions. When we had recourse to these in the late revolution, the object to which they were to lead the way was of the greatest importance, and the exertions were conducted with prudence and system. The disturbances with us commenced by accident and have been conducted with disorder and extravagance, the general dislike to the law had indeed rendered the citizens in some places too susceptible of irritation and too much disposed to commit outrages.

“ However a meeting of from two to five delegates from each township were met to consider of the best means of restoring peace and order, when the commissioners arrived from Philadelphia, avowedly for the same purpose. Their arrival and errand was announ-

\* When Bradford declaimed in favour of war and independence at Redstone, I suspected that he was encouraged by others. It appears however I was mistaken, for a disposition of that kind has not been traced further than that declamation, which was probably the ravings of the moment. The disturbances were not so much promoted by such as had been disappointed of offices as I had been then informed.

ced to the meeting by me, and had a good effect upon their deliberations, but the proclamation and the orders to the militia arrived next morning and produced a contrary effect, and excited a high degree of irritation among those characters that were most inflammatory. I must acknowledge that the commissioners do not offer terms with exceptions of persons or by halves, as the British did at the late revolution. They propose a full indemnity to all offenders, and for all offences, and a remittance of the excise for the time past, and also conditionally to refrain from calling the people out of the counties for trial, on condition of a promised submission to the laws. This is indeed all the President could do on his part, and it is necessary on the part of the people, even if it had no other advantage than to open the way for petitions to Congress in order to obtain a repeal of the excise law, or reasonable amendments. It is also necessary on account of the disorders and threats of violence of the people in opposition. Two committees have agreed to the terms with a reference to the approbation of the people, the obtaining of which from all the people is doubtful ; and there is great dread of internal disorders and violence ; freedom of speaking and writing has been for some time suppressed, but this evil is working its own cure, by rousing and uniting the well disposed to exert themselves in restoring order. *I am, &c.*

This is the letter, which has been represented as so criminal in me, not so much on account of its contents as of the person to whom it was directed. He has informed me that he never read the letter to any person, but told

some sentences out of it perhaps pretty fairly. I did not intend it to be kept a secret. I with difficulty procured it from Mr. Petrikin, and not till I had to promise to return it to him, if necessary for his defence, before he would part with it ; through the haste in which this letter was wrote it is not perfectly accurate, however the liberality of the terms offered in behalf of the President is somewhat exaggerated, and the armed party appearing at, and overawing the Redstone meeting, from which I had returned, omitted with design. I knew liberty poles had been erected at Carlisle, and though I did not know that William Petrikin had any hand in erecting them, yet from what I knew of his character I was afraid he might take a warm part at the meeting, and therefore stated the conduct of government and of the insurgents in such a manner, as to give him no ground to complain of the one, or encouragement to imitate the other, and mentioned my own dislike to the excise law, to shew that the outrageous opposition that was made to it was calculated to prevent and not to promote its repeal. William Petrikin's letter to me contained nothing injurious, and it was the first and only letter he had ever wrote to myself or any other person in the western country to my knowledge And notwithstanding the mischievous rapidity with which inflammatory news was spread through the western country that summer, I could not trace it letters; but one of that sort was discovered, and it was not signed by the author.

I knew that it was reported in the army, and circulated even among the members of Congress, when I took my seat, in November 1794, that I had corresponded with Bradford, and that such of my letters

were found among his papers, as would prove me to have been at the bottom of the insurrection. It will be remembered, that the secretary on his return to Philadelphia told Captain Dicky, that he had sufficient proof of my guilt in his pocket. It was told in the city, as a secret which soon was heard by every body, that proofs were obtained against Smilie, Gallatin and myself, that we were deeply concerned in and promoted the insurrection. I traced some of those stories, to sources from which I did not expect they would have come, and I called on the late attorney general and the attorney of the district, who assured me there was no proof of criminality of any kind against us. The district attorney acknowledged, however, that a scrutiny had been made, and promised when he had leisure, to select the places where my name was mentioned for my perusal. I then designed, to have procured and published a certificate from him, but on second thoughts declined doing it. I knew the attorney general advocated my conduct from what he had observed, and was informed of it when he was commissioner in the western counties. He and judge Yates had sufficiently expressed their confidence in me on their arrival in that country, by sending to me first, explaining the object of their mission in a confidential letter, and employing me to procure the means of corresponding with the meeting. The last time I ever saw the late attorney general, he asked me to take a walk with him at the state house, and after consulting me, with respect to a subject which he thought of importance for the peace and happiness of Pennsylvania, and par-

ticularly of the western counties\*, he took an opportunity of expressing his disapprobation of the liberties that had been taken with my character, and assured me he had always been my advocate. He had long known me; our first acquaintance was at the camp at Amboy, in the year 1776.

The truth is, letters had never at any time passed between me and any person concerned in promoting the insurrection, except colonel Marshal; with him I had corresponded several times, but not for two years previous to the insurrection, except one in answer to a letter respecting his son, then residing in the city, who was about going into a new line of business. There were few men indeed, in whom I would have had more confidence, and none engaged in the insurrection at whose conduct I was so much surpris'd. I never saw Mr. Bradford's hand writing, nor to my knowledge did he ever see mine.

I have near relations living in three of the four western counties, and though I had no opportunity of advising those of them who lived in ensnaring situations, yet I had the satisfaction to find, that every one of them had been uniformly oppos'd to the disorders, and that no friend, with whom I had ever been intimate in any of the counties, was concerned in promoting the disturbances, except colonel Marshal, and he withdrew as soon perhaps as he durst. It might have been otherwise, and I not to blame.

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\* It was about the propriety of Congress at its next session, preparing a previous plan for dividing states so as to prevent the parts to be separated from becoming enemies to each other, in a contest about the division. At his request, I promised to consider of it, but assured him, that the sensible citizens in the western counties did not desire it.



A few days after I arrived in the city, and before the secretary returned, a respectable gentleman, high in office, asked me, with apparent anxiety, if any thing at all was found against me. I answered, that there was not; he asked me if I was certain of that. I told him I was certain there was nothing to be found against me. He then asked me, if I was sure, that none could be procured to perjure themselves against me. I said, I knew nothing about that, and asked him with surprise how he came to suspect such a design. He said, he knew that no means would be left, untried to injure or ruin me.

Until I was informed on the road, coming down, of the secretary's conversation with some of the citizens on his way to Potowmac, and had this information in the city, I did not suspect that even malice itself could have suggested a suspicion of my conduct; but while all regard to morality and decency was sacrificed in order to injure such as had done all in their power, first to prevent and then to allay the disturbances, such as had administered justice to the flames were in some instances considered and treated as good citizens.

## C H A P. XXI.

I HAVE frequently mentioned the official report made by the secretary of the treasury to the President of the United States previous to the issuing of his proclamation, and I have had recourse to it as an authority respecting the riots committed against revenue officers, not having ever heard of several of these riots through any other channel; at the same time, however, I have suggested that the candour of the report was doubtful, and produced some striking instances of misrepresentation. (See Chap. VIII.) I shall now assign some further instances of the secretary's want of candour in this report.

In page 113 of the executive proceedings, he mentions the hostility of the state officers, and particularly of one high official character, to the execution of the laws, as one of the most serious obstacles to their operation, and in a letter to governor Millin, which is now before me, in answer to a demand made by him for an

explanation of this insinuation, he asserts that Albert Gallatin, then a member of Assembly, was of the committee which met at Pittsburgh in September 1791. This is not true, Albert Gallatin and myself were attending the Assembly of Pennsylvania, then in session. In this explanatory letter he states charges against several characters who have been uniformly friends to government; in his charges against Mr. Addison President of the courts in that district, the arts of misrepresentation are carried to a considerable height. I shall briefly detail them. The judge refused to act as deputy out of the line of his official duty in certain instances for the supervisor of the district, though he at the same time assured that officer of ample protection and every necessary assistance to enable him to do the duty of his station himself; his not having treated the excise officers with proper marks of attention, in two instances, is another charge; one of the instances was his telling the tavern keeper, with whom he lodged, that the man who was then a collector of excise was not an acceptable companion in the lodging. The secretary did not reflect that that officer might not have been an acceptable companion for the judge, previous to his being an excise officer, and that the honours attached to that office were not sufficient to elevate his character. I will refer him to the judges of the supreme court of Pennsylvania for the truth of this remark; they are acquainted with the collector. With respect to the inspector not receiving the marked attention of the President of the court, the secretary should have enquired whether there did not exist personal causes abstracted from his holding the office, or whether there were not such

causes existing with some other of the judges on whom the President had no right to impose; for this great crime which was considered as a matter of such importance by the secretary, was nothing more than the President's neglecting to invite the inspector to a seat on the bench during the session of the court, though he had invited a relation of his. None of these instances happened in the county where I reside, and the first I heard of it was from the secretary's official information. I have, however, enquired into them since. With such charges as these the secretary's explanation to the governor of that general suggestion in his report abounds. Why were not real crimes punished in due time? And why were things of no moment or criminality magnified into real offences?

President Addison was early in his endeavours to promote the execution of the excise law. For this purpose he wrote in the newspapers in the summer of 1791, and for the same purpose he attended at Redstone old fort on the 27th of July, on the day when it was resolved by the meeting at that place to petition Congress. Though he took no part in the meeting, he was ready to give his advice, or to exert his authority if necessary in favour of the laws. I conversed with him on the occasion and found he was in favour of submission, for which reason some thought him too friendly to the excise. In his charges to the grand juries, he uniformly reprehended the attacks on excise officers, and recommended a strict cognizance of the offences, and in all his conversation on this subject he testified against the opposition to the law. In the winter previous to the insurrection an animated pub-

fication in the Pittsburgh gazette exhorting the people to a compliance with the law, was ascribed to him, and he procured an agreement among a number of the most respectable distillers to enter their stills, on condition of having officers appointed whose deportment would be respectable (See Chap. v.) I always accounted it a misfortune that he was in Philadelphia when the insurrection commenced; his advice and authority might have been of great advantage; he was very useful in restoring order when he returned; he was threatened by the insurgents before he returned, but this did not prevent him from doing his duty with success. At the same time that he was obnoxious to the insurgents, he was the object of the secretary's resentment; in this, however, he was not singular. Others, who exerted themselves to the utmost in preventing outrages and restoring order, were the peculiar objects of ministerial persecution. After all the scrutiny that could be made and all the exertions to extort testimony, the character of the President and the fifteen associate judges of the four western counties stood unimpeached, except we call the secretary's charge of want of politeness in two instances to excise officers a sufficient cause of impeachment. The truth is, that judges and other friends of order were offended at these officers for not making more vigilant exertions in the execution of their trust; and for treating the people rudely, when conciliating manners might have engaged respect and promoted submission. Certain it is, that when general Wilkin, who purchased whiskey for the army, though his refusing to purchase any that had not paid the excise tax made him partake of the odium at-

ached to the law, yet by his good sense in reasoning with the people, and by his conciliating manners, he induced many to enter their stills in June, 1794, and was morally certain of procuring a general acquiescence at the next opportunity of entering stills. The apprehension of want of vigilance and conciliating manners in the excise officers discouraged those who wished the law to be executed from making exertions. Such citizens did not chuse to be knight-errants in supporting a law, the execution of which was so much neglected by those whose duty it was to enforce obedience to it. However, from the secretary's report to the President, and his explanation of it to the governor, it is evident that the revenue officers were vigilant spies, not only on the conduct, but the language of the citizens, and very minute in reporting the smallest expressions of disrespect to themselves or the law, unconnected with the circumstances of provocation on their part to the secretary; and that though he was not attentive to punish real crimes in the ordinary course of law, yet he was very attentive to record incidents of little importance, and arrange them in the most criminal dress suited to his design, when the crisis arrived which he probably desired and promoted. But the information, though minute, was not accurate. This is usual with the information of spies in all countries. The report contains several other instances of misrepresentation with respect to incidents too trifling to be investigated, which I shall pass unnoticed; one contained in the last paragraph of it, however, is of too much importance to escape remark. His words are: "There is too just cause to believe that this is connected

with an indisposition, too general in that quarter, to share in the common burthens of the community, and with a wish among some persons of influence, to embarrass the government. It is affirmed by well informed persons to be a fact of notoriety, that the revenue laws of the state itself have *always* either been resisted, or very defectively complied with in the same quarter."

This is so palpable a misrepresentation, as to require but little examination to refute. I appeal to the records of the state treasury ; there it will appear that notwithstanding the almost ceaseless distresses of the western counties, some of them have always been the foremost in paying their state taxes of any counties in the commonwealth, and none of them the most backward, and that if there are any arrears remaining due it is on the unseated lands, the property of people in the city or other parts of the state, the collecting of which has been prevented by special interpositions of the legislature. If he had desired to be well informed, it would have been easy for him to have consulted the treasury department of the state, and if he had applied to the land office, he would have found that the efficient revenue produced by it has been more promptly paid by the people of the western counties, than by many in more favourable situations. If he had been in pursuit of truth he would have applied to the proper sources to obtain it. Another object however was in view. It was necessary to load the whole people of the western country, with every description of odium. God knows, too many of them were blameable indeed, but that the revenue laws of the state have been *always*

either resisted or defectively complied with, and that this was promoted by a wish of some persons of influence to embarrass the government, or as he expresses it, (Report p. 110) the enmity which certain active designing leaders had industriously infused into a large proportion of the inhabitants, not against particular laws only, but of more ancient date, against the government of the United States, are charges absolutely void of truth.

I never heard a person either in public or private in that country express a sentiment against the government of the United States since it was ratified, except what fell from Bradford at the Redstone meeting, and so far from having old enmity, he was a most zealous federalist. There were none engaged in the insurrection that ever possessed extensive influence in that country, except colonel Marshall, and he had never been distinguished for political fervor.

Why did not the secretary name the persons and state the facts. If he knew that such influential persons had industriously infused enmity against the government into a large proportion of the inhabitants, he must have known who they were, and what industry they used. Indeed the whole of these suggestions are mere fabrications, published at a critical period for the most nefarious purposes. No testimony to this purpose could be procured by all the influence which was exerted even under all the terrors of an armed force, neither could any proofs of it be obtained on the most careful and judicious scrutiny, made under the di-



rection of the circuit courts. It existed no where but in the fruitful invention of the ex-secretary himself.

Before I leave the secretary's report, I will make one other quotation from it page 117, where he says: "It is not to be doubted that the different stages of this business were regularly notified to the malcontents; and that a conviction of the tendency of the amendments contemplated to effectuate the execution of the law, had matured the resolution to bring matters to a violent crisis."

This insidious assertion was no doubt levelled against Mr. Smilie, and myself; then in Congress. There were no others from the western country in the city who had an opportunity; and the secretary's numerous declarations that we were at the bottom of all the disturbances, and that he had proofs against Mr. Gallatin and us already, his illegal endeavours to extort testimony against us in the western country, his insulting the people there for electing us into Congress, and employing his friend general White to spread falsehoods against us, particularly against myself, was sufficiently explanatory of his intention in the paragraph just quoted. I have already stated that I never was acquainted in the part of the country where the disturbances originated, nor had corresponded even by letter with any person who had been concerned either in promoting or countenancing the disturbances, except James Marthal a considerable time before. I am authorized to make the same declaration respecting Mr. Smilie. Mr. Gallatin was not then in Philadelphia. I had correspondents in Washington county, whose

friendship I value, and whose conduct during the disturbances and previous to their commencement does them honour.

I remember to have received letters from three distillers that spring, and answering them ; that these distillers were not concerned in the insurrection, except in opposing it, is a sufficient justification of my correspondence ; they were William Todd, Esquire, a judge of the court, Mr. John Denniston, and my brother John Findley. Indeed I had no useful information respecting the excise law to write : the bill to which the secretary alludes, he acknowledges was not enacted till the fifth of June, and until the last reading in the House. I was induced by information from the treasury department to believe, that the excise would be turned into a direct tax on stills, and an amendment to that purpose was transmitted from the treasury department to the chairman of the committee which brought in the bill, while it was under discussion in the House, but he did not see cause to move for its adoption. If I had corresponded with the people who unfortunately commenced the insurrection, I flatter myself that I would have contributed by removing their mistakes to have prevented their excesses. I am sure all with whom I have corresponded will bear witness that that would have been my endeavour.

When we reflect that the law in question authorised the state courts to take cognizance of offences against the United States, that long before it was enacted the secretary had procured writs to be issued out of the district court to compel the appearance of delinquent distillers at Philadelphia, and delayed to have these writs

executed until harvest, after the people had been gratified with the reasonable expectations of having their supposed delinquency examined in the vicinity of their residence, and that these writs, the execution of which produced the insurrection, were made returnable in a manner or at a time which rendered them of no effect ; I say when these circumstances are candidly reflected on, the reader will be able to decide for himself, whether there is not as solid ground, as the nature of the case can be supposed to admit, to conclude that the secretary himself at this period contemplated and planned to promote the violent crisis which took place. By his own account we find he was regularly informed by his spies of the most minute circumstances of the clandestine outrages, and conducted his plan in a manner the best calculated to excite an open rupture. If this was not his design, why did he not use the proper means of restraining offences in season, and why did he not cause the process to be served sooner, and at a more convenient season, or otherwise make an experiment of the success of the state courts ?

The great error among the people was an opinion, that an immoral law might be opposed and yet the government respected, and all the other laws obeyed, and they firmly believed that the excise law was an immoral one. This theory became with many a religious principle, in defence of which they reasoned with considerable address. In endeavouring to restore order, and submission to the laws, the most arduous

task with people otherwise of good morals was to convince them of the error of this principle. As no riots that I knew of were attempted in the county where I reside, or by the people of it previous to the insurrection, and as I had never heard any person threaten any other kind of opposition than laying aside their tools, I consequently knew nothing of this principle being entertained till the insurrection took place; but I then found it to be one of the greatest obstacles to people even of good understanding signing such assurances as might imply an approbation of the law. Indeed I despair that people, residing in situations where excises, applying directly to agriculture, demand two or threetimes the quantum of tax in proportion to the price in the market for the produce of their farm, that the farmers in more favourable situations have to pay, can ever be brought to approve of such a law by any methods in the power of government. Their objections are obvious and easily comprehended, and address themselves powerfully to their interests; whereas the arguments arising from the unequal pressure of imposts on the inhabitants of towns, and people generally who manufacture little themselves, and consequently consume much of foreign manufactures or luxuries, not coming under their observation, are not understood nor admitted in abatement of their own complaints; consequently the citizens in situations remote from market are advocates for direct taxes, proportioned to the value of property, and always pay them without complaint. To explain the operation

of other taxes, which tended to an abatement of the pressure of the excise tax, and the inequality which would arise from apportioning direct taxes according to the constitutional rule, was the great object of those who endeavoured to reconcile the people to the excise law. There were circumstances however which could not be accommodated to the principles of justice. These were balanced with political considerations.

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C H A P XXII.

TWO important questions have agitated the public mind, which the facts stated in this work, by being judiciously compared, will assist the reader in determining. The first is, whether or not the insurrection was the result of a previous combination or preconcerted plan. The second is, whether or not the march of an army into the country was necessary for procuring submission to the laws, protection to the revenue officers, and obtaining proper subjects for atonement. About these there has been a great variety of opinion.

With respect to the first, the secretary, in his report and otherwise, has taken so much pains to impress the public mind with an opinion that state officers used the weight of their official influence in promoting *combinations and hostility against* the laws, that even members of Congress had been employed in maturing the resolution to bring matters to a *violent crisis*, and

this opinion has been so industriously promoted in the army and throughout the United States by various means, that notwithstanding it has not been supported by a single well attested fact, the impression that has been made by it is not yet fully removed. By the relation I have given, however, it will appear, that the insurrection commenced without any preconcert among the people, and arose from an event which they could not have foreseen; that even those, whose names afterwards made the greatest figure in the insurrection, were not privy to its commencement; that if the marshal had served the remaining writ without waiting to go to Pittsburgh and bring the inspector along with him, he would have met with no interruption in the discharge of his duty, and the distillers would have entered for their appearance at Philadelphia, however distressing and unexpected such a journey might have been to them. It is evident that if he had conducted in this manner, the last writ might have been served before the evening on which the militia were rendezvoused at the appeal, and that if the inspector had not come out with the marshal and put himself unnecessarily in the way, the attack on him would not have happened; and that if he had not rashly first attacked the party of young fellows, who came the first morning to his house, and killed and wounded a number of them, the second and most formidable attempt would not have been made; and further, that if even on the second attempt the papers had been given up, or the house had been permitted to have been searched for them by a few men selected for that purpose, the party would have dispersed, the subsequent meetings would not

have taken place, and the rioters would have been prosecuted individually with success before the state courts, as they had been for the riot committed on the state excisemen.

So far were the judges of the county courts, or the presiding judge of the district, from being in a combination against the execution of the law, that on a scrutiny, no doubt the more severe, that the former supervisor and the secretary of the treasury had prejudged their character, it appeared to full conviction that they were without exception friendly to the execution of the laws. It is certain that a prosecution never failed for want of sufficient zeal in the courts ; the difficulty was to find evidence. It will appear surprising that when the revenue officers could give such minute and circumstantial information to the secretary, which he details in his report, and more minutely in his explanatory letter to the governor, that these same officers could never produce testimony to the state courts to enable them to punish breaches of the peace against themselves ; and that even the testimony which they produced to support prosecutions in the federal courts was either evidently fabricated or doubtful. It is acknowledged that the testimony they procured against Kerr and Beer, was absolutely false. It is not less certain that the testimony given against Robert Smilie was unfounded, and it is the general opinion that the testimony produced against M'Culloch and some others was equally unworthy of credit.

If the insurrection had been the result of a preconcerted plan, some discovery of it would have been found by the commissioners of the United States and



of the state of Pennsylvania, while in the western country, but so far was this from being the case that the commissioners sent by the President of the United States to the western country, in their report, which, though concise, gives an intelligent and candid account of the temper and situation of the country until the day of signing the amnesty, and a relation of many of the grievances of which the people complained, yet does not give the least countenance to the opinion that the insurrection was the result of a preconcerted plan, or that the state courts had been defective in their duty, or the judges, &c. opposed to the execution of the laws, and it was on the information given in this report that the army was ordered to rendezvous. It is printed in the proceedings of the executive, and perfectly agrees with the preceding relation as far as it enters into the subject.

The Report of the state commissioners, who acted in concert with the commissioners of the United States, is not printed, but I have an authenticated copy of it before me. It is contained in a series of letters written from the western country to the governor, and preserved on files in the secretary's office. As it is not in print I will give some extracts from it. In page 2, the commissioners give the following statement.

"The marshal of the district of Pennsylvania had process to serve on divers persons residing in the counties of Fayette and Allegany, and executed them all (above thirty) without molestation or difficulty, excepting one which was against a Mr. Shaw. He or some other person went to the place where doctor Beard, the brigade inspector for Washington county

was hearing appeals made by some of a battallion which had been called upon for its proportion of the eighty thousand men required to be in readiness agreeably to an act of congress. There were upwards of fifty there with their fire-arms, to whom it was related that the federal sheriff, (as they styled the marshal) had been serving writs in Allegany county and carrying the people to Philadelphia, for not complying with the excise laws, and that he was at general Nevil's house. It was in the night of the——of last month; between thirty and forty flew instantly to their arms, and marched towards Mr. Nevil's above twelve miles distant, where they appeared early next morning.—— The delinquents against whom the Marshal had process told him that they would enter their stills, and pay him the excise together with the cost of suit. Major Lenox applauded their prudent conduct, and told them that though he had not authority to comply with their wishes, yet, if they would enter their stills with the inspector, and procure his certificate, and send it to Philadelphia, upon payment of the money due with the costs he was persuaded all further prosecution would be stayed. If this detail is true, it is evident that the outrages committed at Mr. Nevil's house were not owing to deliberate preconcerted measures, but originated in an unbridled gust of passion artfully raised among young men, who may have been at the time too much heated with strong drink."

In their third letter the commissioners, stating the disappointment of their expectations from the meeting at Redstone old Fort, occasioned by an armed party,

and the outrageous behaviour of Mr. Bradford, thus express themselves : " From our best conjecture the people of WASHINGTON if governed by what appears to be the majority, will prefer a civil war to a submission to the excise laws, so infatuated and frantic are their leaders in opposition ; a great majority, however, of the other three counties, are friends to peace and order."

To explain this character of WASHINGTON county, it is to be remarked that it was believed that the armed party whose presence and behaviour terrified the meeting came there from WASHINGTON county, in concert with Bradford, for that purpose. I was present, and believed this to be the case, until afterwards that it was fully proved that the company in arms knew nothing of the meeting being held there, till they were near the ground, and that their whole object was to pay an unfriendly visit to Mr. Jackson. I heard the man, who I am since informed was the leader of the party, censure Bradford's harrangue while he was delivering it to the meeting ; yet it is certain the spirit of opposition was stronger in a part of that county than in any other place.

In their fourth and last letter, written from Bedford when the commissioners were on their return, they say " Upon the whole we entertain a reasonable hope that the great mass of the people will comply with the terms proposed, and be dutiful citizens in future, and that their example and influence will in a few days prevail on most of the residue to do the same. However it must not be concealed that there are several unruly and turbulent spirits, who will require correction and punishment, and these men having little or no property to lose, may possibly create new disturbances.

Should our opinion prove to be well founded, it is probable the ordinary course of judicial powers may be sufficient to reduce them to submission and order, without military aid."

The commissioners of the Union and of the state, concurred in their consultations and measures ; as far as there was any difference, the chief justice was the most severe ; he wanted to have the committees to sign assurances individually at the first, and to have the power of the civil magistrate, put to the test without delay. Though this was complained of at the time, as too severe, the people were afterwards convinced that he was for their good ; in one instance, he urged a justice of the peace to exert his authority, and he did it with success.

The result of the scrutiny made by the judiciary, aided by the terrors of the army, the dispensing power of the commander in chief, and the artful and arbitrary conduct of the secretary, and also the examinations of numerous witnesses before the circuit court held at Philadelphia and York, agree in proving to a demonstration, the truth of the opinion given by the commissioners, that *the outrages committed at Mr. Nevil's house, were not owing to deliberate preconcerted measures, but originated in an unbridled gust of passion, &c.*

With respect to the second question, viz. whether the march of an army into the western country was necessary, &c. I have already expressed my own opinion that it was not necessary for the objects proposed, and in this I was supported by that of well informed persons who knew the state of the country better than I did myself. I have been particular in my

enquiries of the same and other well informed persons, a year since the insurrection, and though it is the opinion of some individuals, that the submission to the laws by some of the most obstinate people south of the Monongahela, was sooner accomplished and rendered more compleat by the march of the army into the country, than it would otherwise have been ; yet it is agreed by all, with whom I have conversed on the subject, that in all other parts of the country the submission would have been compleat without it. The greater number of well informed persons, however, believe that it would have been compleat in all the counties, but this fact cannot now be ascertained with precision. It is certain, that the state courts were at no time interrupted, and that they have since sentenced to correction and punishment such as they thought deserved it for offences committed during the disturbances, with as little difficulty as at any other time, indeed, I never knew of a process from a justice of the peace resisted even in the time of the insurrection, and the magistrates had in many places proceeded against offenders without resistance, before the army left Carlisle. In the places where the disturbances prevailed, the alarm and terror was so great as to render it imprudent, if not impracticable, to execute the laws of the state, until the agitation would subside, and till the friends of order could know and put confidence in each other.

But after all, I do not conclude that it was improper in the President to order the army to advance into the country. I have no doubt, but that if he had received the same assurances before the different divisions

of the army had rendezvoused, which he did at Carlisle, he would not have ordered the army to march; but he must have judged the assurance; to have been in a higher degree unequivocal, than could be procured in so short a time, to have convinced him of the propriety of putting a stop to the expedition when it was so far advanced; for however confident Mr. Redick and myself were, who drew our information from our own observations, and the observations of others in whom we had perfect confidence, taken on the spot, yet as the President had not the opportunity of making observations for himself, we could not expect his confidence to be so compleat or so firmly established as ours.

The difficulty that had been experienced in raising the army at the first, and the eagerness discovered by the officers and others at Carlisle to march into the western counties, must have had its weight with the President in determining him to carry forward the expedition. He might reasonably conclude, that bad consequences in future might result from disgusting them, by what those of greatest influence might think a premature discharge. As he mixed every day with the army, in order to impress it with a proper sense of the importance of subordination to the laws, it is not to be doubted, but that he availed himself of this opportunity of discovering its disposition, and that his determination was in some measure influenced by that disposition; nor is it to be doubted, but that the advice of secretary Hamilton, and his influence with the army, were exerted in favour of carrying on the expedition.

His information and advice were calculated to promote that object from the first.

The President, however, did not consider the number of the army, nor its advance into the western country, as destined exclusively for restoring submission to the laws, or coercing offenders in that quarter; the flame had caught in other places, and discontents prevailed and liberty poles were erected, through a great extent of country, on the east side of the mountains, and a rising had actually taken place in the state of Maryland. It was these untoward circumstances which prevented the President from giving longer time for the people in the western counties to restore order by their own efforts; for further information on this subject, the chapters which describe the temper of the army at Carlisle, and the communications of the President to the commissioners from the Parkison ferry meeting, may be examined.

I have suggested oftener than once, that the head of the revenue department conducted the execution of the law in the western district, in a manner that was calculated to promote the event that happened. To support a suggestion of this nature, positive proof cannot be obtained; to me, however, it appears better established than could reasonably have been expected; from the means I had used to promote a due execution of the law, and the observations I had made on the manner in which it was conducted, I had suspected his design, and for some time looked forward to the event with dread; but in the spring of 1794, when competent powers were vested in the state courts, my prospects

brightened, and I blamed myself for my suspicions. But the mine was ready to be sprung, when I had flattered myself that the danger was over. I will not however, recapitulate the grounds upon which my opinion was founded, but leave the reader to examine and compare the facts for himself, and judge of the result. The facts are truly stated.

Q. q





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## A P P E N D I X.

**W**HEN the President received the information of the daring outrage committed at the house of the Inspector, he held a conference with the heads of the departments of the federal government, and the governor and law officers of the state of Pennsylvania, and though no record is preserved of the sentiments expressed on that occasion, yet it is known, that the chief justice of the state, gave it as his opinion, that the power of the judiciary should be further exerted, and have a full and fair trial, before it would be proper to employ a military force, and that the governor and law officers of the state, and the secretary of state of the United States, concurred with him in that opinion. In support of this opinion, the governor made a communication to the President in writing, dated the 5th of August, 1794. The correspondence which commenced with this letter, is to be found in the executive proceedings, from page 58 to 98.

In this communication, after stating the outrages that had taken place, together with their special circumstances, the governor proceeds to remark "that whatever construction may be given on the part of the United States, to the facts that have been recited, I cannot hesitate to declare, on the part of Pennsylvania, that the incompetency of the judiciary department

of her government, to vindicate the violated laws, has not at this period been sufficiently apparent, and that the military power of the government ought not to be employed until its judiciary authority, after a fair experiment, has proved incompetent to enforce obedience, or to punish infractions of the laws."

After stating the principles on which the military force can with propriety be called forth, in aid of the civil authority, he proceeds to say: "Experience furnishes the strongest inducements to my mind, for persevering in this lenient course. Riots have heretofore been committed in opposition to the laws of Pennsylvania, but the rioters have invariably been punished by our courts of justice. In opposition to the laws of the United States, in opposition to the very laws now opposed, and in the very counties supposed to be combined in the present opposition, riots have likewise occurred, but in every instance, supported by legal proof, the offenders have been indicted, convicted and punished before the tribunals of the state. This result does not announce a defect of jurisdiction, a want of judicial power, or disposition to punish infractions of the law; a necessity of an appeal from the political to the physical strength of the nation.

"But another principle of policy deserves some consideration. In a free country it must be expedient to convince the citizens of the necessity that shall at any time induce the government to employ the coercive authority with which it is invested. To convince them, that it is necessary to call forth the military power, for the purpose of executing the laws, it must be shown, that the judicial power has in vain attempted to punish those who violate them, and therefore thinking, as I do, that the incompetency of the power of Pennsylvania has not been sufficiently ascertained, I remarked in the course of our late conference, that I did not think it would be an easy task to embody the militia on the present occasion."

In the conference, the governor had been called on to order out the militia of the state, in pursuance of a law of the state, which was supposed to exist, but which, on examination, was

found to be repealed. The propriety of ordering out a military force was then suggested to him, in consequence of his general power to enforce the due execution of the laws. The discussion of this principle produced the correspondence, from which I have made these quotations.

The secretary of state of the United States, in his reply to the governor's first letter, does not so much object to the principles advanced by the governor, as to his opinion respecting the existing circumstances, and after stating the facts and reciting the certificate from the judge, which had been newly obtained, he says, "Thus then, is it unequivocally and in due form ascertained in reference to the government of the United States, that the judiciary authority, after a fair and full experiment, has proved incompetent to enforce obedience to, or to punish infractions of, the laws—that the strength and audacity of certain lawless combinations have baffled and destroyed the efforts of the judiciary authority, to recover penalties or inflict punishments, and that this authority by a regular notification of this state of things, has in the last resort, as an auxiliary of the civil authority, claimed the intervention of the military power of the United States," &c.

In the progress of this correspondence, the secretary of state of the United States informs the governor, that the question unequivocally was, if he as the executive of the state has power to put the militia in motion, previous to a requisition from the President under the laws of the United States, if it should be thought advisable so to do, &c. This question being thus explicitly stated in the last letter to the governor, and the actual requisition of the militia rendering a reply unnecessary and calling the governor's attention from the subject, we have to regret the want of his answer to it. But if I understand him rightly in the preceding letters, he did not conceive that he was justified by the constitutional power vested in him, in calling out the militia, unless he was convinced in his own judgment that the judiciary authority was incompetent to vindicate the violated laws, or was called on to do so by a formal requisi-

tion from the President of the United States. In vindication of that opinion, he suggests, that the President's responsibility is shielded by the interposition of the opinion of a judge of the supreme court, certified according to law, which the governor's is not.

The governor says, that it is certain that at the time of the conference there was no satisfactory evidence of the incompetency of the judicial authority, to vindicate the violated laws, and that therefore he could not as the executive magistrate proceed to a military plan.

The secretary in behalf of the President disclaims his being under an obligation to judge of the validity of the testimony himself, and manifests his determination to depend on the decision made by the proper authority, viz. the opinion of a district or associate judge, to whose responsibility he solely referred the competency of the testimony. Judge Wilton who gave the official certificate which made it lawful for the President to aid the judicial authority by military force, did so on his own opinion of the validity of the testimony that was laid before him by the executive. There were no witnesses examined, nor depositions transmitted; some private letters containing information of the facts and the general notoriety of the outrages were considered as sufficient vouchers on which to ground the judge's certificate, and this certificate was the authority which warranted the military expedition.

It must be admitted, that in times of public confusion and danger the obtaining of legal testimony would sometimes be attended with too much delay, and that in such cases the notoriety of the facts supercedes the necessity of legal forms; still however, there is danger of mistakes, and it is certain, that the President and associate judge, were imposed on with respect to some material facts respecting the riots, until a scrutiny was made by the circuit court. Some of these impositions were too deeply impressed on the public mind by the report of the secretary of the treasury, in which they were sanctioned by his official authority, but expressly contradicted by unexceptionable testimony taken before the court.

The chief justice with the concurrence of the other law officers of Pennsylvania, at the conference, first suggested the plan of sending commissioners to the western counties, and in acquiescence with this advice, he and general Irwin were appointed by the governor to that service. Though in a letter by the secretary of the 7th August, the President objects to the governor's opinion, that a further trial of the power of the judiciary should be made, before the aid of the military force was required, yet he says, "that to manifest his attention to the principle that a firm and energetic conduct does not preclude the exercise of prudent and humane policy he has (as the governor has been also advised) concluded on the measure of sending commissioners to the discontented counties to make one more experiment of a conciliatory appeal to the reason, virtue, and patriotism of their inhabitants, and has also signified to you how agreeable would be to him your co-operation in the same expedient, which you have been pleased to afford."

This interesting correspondence chiefly embraces two subjects of controversy, viz. the responsibility of the executives of the union and of the commonwealth, and the incompetency of the judicial authority, which is affirmed in behalf of the President, and objected to by the governor. Without deciding positively betwixt the two opinions, it is worth observing, that though the law first provided for sending special sessions of the court into the delinquent country, and afterwards vested the authority in the state courts, yet the competency of neither one nor the other of these methods prescribed by law was ever put to the test, and that all the trial that had been made of the competency of the judicial authority was by the marshal serving the processses, which gave rise to the insurrection, and that even in this case, that officer served thirty nine writs without molestation, to thirty four of which at least a proper submission was testified, and that resistance was offered only in one case out of forty, and not till the obnoxious inspector assisted with his presence, and till the last case. It is true, a deputy marshal was

sent two years before, but influenced by the advice of the inspector and his own fears, he did not attempt to exercise his authority; a sheriff of the county, or probably a marshal of good character residing in the country, could at any time have executed writs; it has been observed, that sheriff Hamilton proposed to do it even in the time of the insurrection. The reader will judge, whether this was a fair and full trial of the incompetency of the judiciary, as asserted in the name of the President.

If the judiciary authority had been exercised agreeably to the provisions made by law, I am confident no insurrection, nor resistance would ever have happened, and if in addition to sending commissioners the governor had so far risked his responsibility, as to have embodied a squadron of light horse and marched into the western counties, order would have been restored without the aid of any other force; this would have been a center for those who were timid and well disposed to rally round, and would sooner have produced a discrimination of parties; it would also have afforded protection and given confidence to the civil magistrate, in places where the spirit of opposition had the ascendant, and encouraged the orderly citizens in all parts of the country. I will not assert that the governor had competent authority for this purpose, but I cannot refrain from expressing a wish that he had construed his powers to have extended so far, and trusted something to the discretion of the legislature afterwards.

However, it must be admitted in behalf of the governor, that he had little time for reflection; for the decisive certificate was procured from the associate judge the next day after the conference, at which it was proposed to the governor to call out the militia under his own authority.

The citizens of Ohio and Monongahela counties in Virginia had been earnestly solicited by circular letters from Mr. Bradford, who believed he had influence among them, to join in the insurrection, or at all events to attend the Parkison meeting, and give their advice. He no doubt expected them

to strengthen his party at that meeting in order to form a combination against the authority of the government. Three delegates attended from Ohio county at this and at the Redstone meeting, but I have not been informed what part they acted; it appears, they waited on the commissioners at Pittsburgh, along with the first committee of twelve. The commissioners informed them that they had no authority out of the fourth survey of Pennsylvania, but at the same time encouraged them to expect no further trouble for indictable offences, if they gave assurances of submission to the laws for themselves, and in behalf of those by whom they had been delegated. They seem to have been sent but by a few people, and I do not find, that any thing further was done respecting them. There had been but one riot committed there; the collector of the revenue appears to have given up his papers to the rioters without resistance; therefore, there were no instances of flagrant outrage. The aversion possessed by the citizens of those counties of Virginia to the government and laws of Pennsylvania, and to the people of it near them, occasioned by the territorial contest, had a good effect in preventing a union in the present opposition.

Before the army left the western country, a separate corps consisting of not more than 2,500 was raised for a term, not exceeding three months. They encamped near the Monongahela on the south side, under the command of general Morgan. This measure was sanctioned by a law, dated November 29th, 1794. The object of continuing this force in the country was *to cause the laws to be duly executed*, they were partly raised out of the corps that were employed in the expedition, and partly enlisted in the country; many of the last were said to have been the most troublesome of the insurgents: I was not acquainted with any of them, and as they encamped near forty miles from where I reside, though they remained a considerable time in the country after I returned from Congress, I heard more of them than if they had not been in the country,



The people in that part of the country, however, complain, that many of them for some time at first, demanded free quarters and such things as they stood in need of without pay, and that some of the officers committed indictable offences; but when the persons, against whom the offences were committed, commenced prosecutions, they settled the disputes amicably, and behaved well for the future. And when the people took courage to refuse to submit to impositions, the soldiers ceased to demand free quarters or to be otherwise troublesome.

Before the army left the country, the commander in chief prescribed the form of an oath which he required the justices of the peace to administer to the citizens, whom he commanded to appear indifferently before the magistrates for that purpose. It was taken by a number of people in Pittsburgh, and I am informed by a few in some other places. How general Lee came to assume the high legislative authority, necessary for enacting an oath of allegiance and requiring the magistrates to administer and the people to swear it, I never have been informed; it is not contained in the President's instructions to him, nor had the constitution vested the President with authority of that kind. General Lee must have known, that a magistrate had no authority to administer an oath, that the law did not prescribe. The people generally through the counties, however, paid no respect to these orders.

Previous to the return of the army, he issued a proclamation agreeably to the President's instructions, to stop all prosecutions against the insurgents, except certain persons therein named. Several of the excepted persons afterwards gave themselves up to general Morgan and stood their trial, and were acquitted. Bradford and a few others left the country, and have not to my knowledge returned again. Those from Cumberland and Northumberland counties, who were indicted for erecting liberty poles, &c. had their trial put off till the sessions of the circuit court, held at Philadelphia, in April, 1796, and then the prosecution was withdrawn by the district attorney. In some counties, on both sides of the mountain, those

who erected liberty poles were heavily fined by the state courts.

Before the secretary of the treasury left the army, he made arrangements for settling with the delinquent distillers. He directed that they should be permitted to enter their stills on paying arrearages according to the capacity of the stills, for the year that commenced in June 1793, and for the current year. It was some time in December, before these arrangements were made known. Many complied with the terms and entered their stills, and some left them with the collector, not having wherewith to pay his demands. Some in Westmoreland, and perhaps in other counties, absolutely refused to pay the arrearages for 1793, but offered to pay for the current year, and enter their stills, but the money was not received and permission to enter their stills was refused. They demanded permission to enter their stills again in June 1795, and were refused. They however continued to employ their stills, and with a decision at law; they say, they were always willing to submit, but had not opportunity to enter their stills. All the distillers complain of being obliged to pay the arrearages of 1793, because they had not an opportunity of charging it to the owner who had his grain distilled, or laying it on the consumer according to the intention of the law. Some were making attempts to sue for the recovery of what they had paid. Those who stand out against paying the arrearages, are mostly men of information and property, and they believe the secretary had no authority by law to admit entries at any time, but that which the law prescribes; nor any legal power to refuse entries of stills, on any conditions made by his own authority. Subpœnas were served on these delinquent distillers last summer; but after they had appeared at two courts, no prosecution was commenced.

Permission to enter stills had been refused at the inspecting offices, the first or second day after the month of June expired, immediately preceding the insurrection. What a pity it was, that if the entry of stills could be admitted at the discre-

tion of an executive officer in December, that the same discretion had not been exercised early in the month of July.

As no person near where I reside was disturbed by the army, nor prosecuted by the judiciary, there is no complaint, on their own account; but on enquiry I find that in the parts of the country where people against whom there was no charge were taken prisoners and dragged to Pittsburgh, and several of them to Philadelphia, there is much heart burning. I have conversed with some men of influence, who were at all times the warmest friends of government, who acknowledge that their confidence in, and love of, the government, is much abated. I mention these circumstances to shew how much better it would have been to have made a seasonable and energetic use of the ordinary powers of government, before things came to such a crisis as to require such extraordinary remedies, as can scarcely be so conducted but that they will create some new grounds of complaint. Every other means should be used to the utmost before a militia army is raised; for if they are frequently called forth, or called forth on a service which they find not to have been absolutely necessary, or the necessity of which they think might have been prevented, it will not be easy to rouse them again when the public interest may require it; in this case a standing army may become necessary, and I know a standing army is not the wish of the people of the United States, and hope it will long be unnecessary.

In one year since the insurrection the western survey of Pennsylvania has remitted to the treasury about 20,000 dollars of excise tax. This amounts to one fifth of the nett revenue raised in one year on spirits distilled from domestic materials in the whole United States. It is true this includes the arrearages arising from the preceding year. Of these I do not know the amount; but when it is considered that many left their stills with the collector rather than pay the arrearages, and that others preferred standing an action which is not yet decided, the greater part must be set to the account of the year 1795. If other parts of the union paid in the same pro-

portion as to the number, without calculating on the wealth of the inhabitants, the aggregate amount would be little short of a million of dollars annually.

Whatsoever difference of opinion might have existed as to the policy of the measure when the excise law was enacted, there could be but one opinion among dispassionate citizens with respect to the impolicy of repealing it on the account of a riotous opposition in a part of one small survey, while that mode of opposition continued, and all other parts of the union professedly submitted; but now when the authority of the law is acknowledged throughout the union, it is proper to enquire into the productiveness of the revenue arising from it, and the expediency of continuing it. It is not my object to make any observations on the general principles of an excise system, its suitableness to, or practicability in, this country; but if it is true that, notwithstanding the frequent revisions of the law, this tax does not yield 100,000 dollars as net revenue,\* that from some states, where it is reasonable to suppose a considerable quantity of those spirits are manufactured and consumed, after an experiment of five years, little or no revenue can be procured, though the officers receive their salaries for collecting it. If it is true that nearly one-third of this revenue is necessarily expended in the collection of it, and that the comparative quantity of spirits distilled is decreasing, and the importation and consumption of spirits and other liquors have rapidly in-

\* So much of the amount of this revenue, as it is stated in the official reports, depends on estimates for which the data are not certain, and the drawbacks for that year not being fully ascertained, these statements may not be perfectly accurate; but, by the official statements for the year ending with June 1795, the produce of the excise on domestic spirits amounts to about 140,000 dollars, for the year 1792, the expence of collecting amounted to more than 41,000 dollars, exclusive of the additional expence occasioned by it in the accounting offices of the treasury department; adding this, and including the expence of new, though unproductive districts since erected, the whole expence of collecting cannot be estimated at less than 45,000 dollars per annum; taking this from 140,000 dollars, leaves 95,000 dollars to the revenue; but this being still liable to drawbacks on the revenue for exportation, stating that the expence of collection is equal to half the nett proceeds of the revenue must be pretty near the truth.

creased, since the commencement of the excise on domestic spirits;\* I say if these things are true, it may soon be proper for the legislature to enquire whether so small an amount of revenue is a sufficient object for the employment of such a number of officers, and for occasioning so much discontent in those parts of the union, which are increasing most rapidly in population.

It is proper to examine whether even this small amount of revenue may not prove a source of jealousy, and eventually alienate the affections and confidence of one part of the citizens from the other. It is no unreasonable conjecture to suppose, that a crisis may happen in the course of human events, when this alienation may occasion very disagreeable consequences, which by seasonable arrangements might be prevented.

A riotous opposition to the excise law in one survey has already cost the United States more money, than will probably be produced by that tax from the whole United States, when it has been ten years in operation; and though it is to be expected that the display of the power of government in enforcing submission to the laws in that instance may long prevent the necessity of another expedition, either to protect the officers of government, or to punish offenders against its laws, yet it must be acknowledged that this tremendous and expensive remedy will not be adequate to prevent evasions of the law in so wide an extent of territory, where the prepossessions against it are general. If the levying an excise on this, and all other manufactures in the country, would produce a sufficient revenue to prevent the necessity of a direct tax, it would afford a strong argument to those who are opposed to direct taxes, in favour of continuing and extending excises; but when it is discovered that some of them, for instance the excise on snuff, will not produce perhaps as much in a year as would pay the expence of making the

\* By the official report, it appears that from the year 1791, in which the excise on spirits from domestic materials commenced, till the year 1794, the quantity of imported spirits increased from 3,673,199 gallons, to 5,693,369 gallons, an increase of nearly two-fifths in the course of two years; and that the importation of wines, porter and beer, has increased in a much greater proportion.

law, and that now, when a tax of 1,200,000 dollars appears to be absolutely necessary, the greatest advocates for excises cannot lay their hand on subjects for such taxes, it is time to enquire whether it is proper to persist in that course of taxation.

It will not do for us to depend on raising effective revenues from excises on manufactures, as some nations in Europe do. In these nations a great proportion of the wealth of the country is vested in manufactures, and from them their exports are produced; but in our country, where manufactures are in their infancy, and but a small amount of capital vested in them, and where the wealth of the inhabitants consists chiefly in land and objects of agriculture, or is employed in a commerce which is supported by agriculture; land itself with the stock that is employed on it, and commerce, must be the dernier resort for efficient revenues. If any aid can be drawn from manufactures, I suspect it cannot be procured to any considerable extent in the mode of excises. If this circumstance had been seasonably adverted to, when the state debts were assumed, &c. by those who are most obstinately opposed to direct taxes, so great an amount of revenue would not have been necessary; but in the present state of our finances we cannot put off direct taxes much longer, and when they come, as come they must, the writer will not avoid his share of the public burthens. If he studied only his own interest, excises would to him be the most favourable mode of taxation, as the proportion, he would pay in that way, would be much less than would fall to his share by a direct tax.

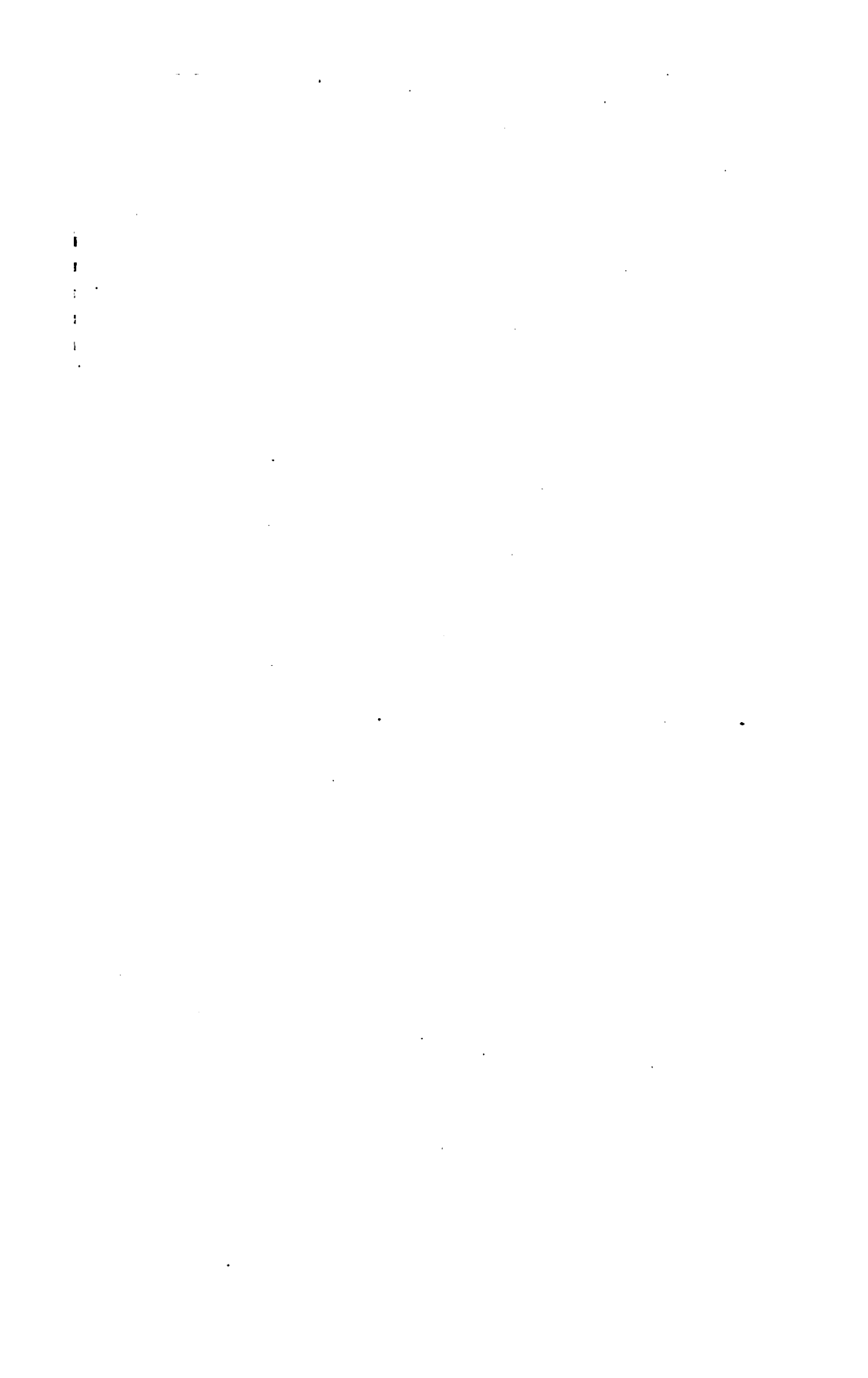
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N O T E [A] p. 183.

We asked Mr. McFarlane if he would permit the office to be kept in his house, if general Nevil should be the officer;

he answered, that if he was the officer, he was personally so obnoxious to the people, that it would be more prudent for him to keep it for some time in Pittsburgh, where the garrison was; but that any person not equally obnoxious might open an office with safety in any part of the country. We did not mention general Nevil's name to the President.

F I N I S.









1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles.

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and titles.

